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MALVINA,

BY

*MADAME C****,*

AUTHORESS OF CLARE D'ALBE, AND AMELIA MANSFIELD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MISS GUNNING,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MALVINA.

CHAP. I.

ADIEU, beloved Earth! ſacred aſylum which contains all that is dearest to my heart! Adieu, precious remains of my friend, my companion, my ſiſter! Thus ſaid the ſorrowing Malvina de Sorcy, as her tears fell on the tomb of her beloved friend, whom ſhe had recently loſt.—Adieu, dear ſhade! whom I ſhall never ceaſe to regret; the deſtiny which purſues me, now tears me from the melancholy and ſoothing conſolation of daily weeping over thy

aſhes.—I am going far from this ſpot, and ah how ſoon will the briar extend its rude branches over the ſtone which covers thee, and in a little time will even conceal it from the eye of friendſhip. I am going! and the dear remembrance of thee will accompany me for ever, while the frivolous admirers of thy youth will no longer remember thy exiſtence.—Though Heaven, by continuing my life, prevents me from joining the deareſt part of myſelf; that cruel moment which ſeparated us, will never be effaced.—Ah! I ſhall continually behold that ſweet ſmile, with which you endeavoured to conſole me;—and that laſt expreſſive look, which penetrated my ſoul as it was arreſted by the ſeal of death.—— Madam, the carriage is ready, ſaid a little girl who came running, and interrupted Malvina's melancholy ſoliloquy. She was followed by an attendant, who, obſerving Malvina on her knees in the ſnow, and her boſom touching the icy ſtone, haſtily exclaimed,

exclaimed, Good God, madam! are you determined to die on the tomb of my lady? It is a mercy from Heaven that you are obliged to leave this place! for though the ſeaſon is ſo ſevere, you cannot reſiſt viſiting this tomb, morning and evening.—Malvina aroſe in ſilence, without attending to what had been ſaid, for grief in ſuch a mind as ſhe poſſeſſed, withdraws it from the world. The ſituation of ſuch beings is as little known as underſtood, and but few, very few, will even take the trouble to develope them. Ah, how few are there which can even comprehend the ſilent language which explains the ſorrows, on which ſenſibility banquets, or ever mark its liquid eſſence, that falls involuntarily from the eye, while its deep ſource is enſhrined in the heart.

Malvina de Sorcy was a French woman, who was left a widow at five-and-twenty, of a man ſhe had never loved.—As

ſoon as ſhe became independent, ſhe eagerly embraced the firſt moment of her liberty to unite herſelf once more to the friend of her infancy; who had been narried ſome years to a gentleman in England.—She haſtened to her, and for three years they lived together, and enjoyed the charms of diſintereſted friendſhip: whoſe ſweet and ſoothing influence mitigated the ſorrow, which the depraved conduct of Lady Sheridan's huſband occaſioned: and ſoftened to Malvina the impoſſibility of returning to her native country, after her ſo long reſiding in England.—Some friends, however, intimated to her, that ſhe muſt reſolve to give up her friend, or reſign her fortune in France.—She inſtantly decided in favor of her friend; and this ſacrifice was the ſpontaneous determination of her heart; which Lady Sheridan obſerving, thought it her duty to point out how very injurious this diſintereſted conduct would prove to herſelf, but without effect,

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rather to relieve himſelf from a duty which might in the ſlighteſt degree, reſtrain him from his ungovernable love of play, and diſſipation.—Though the preſence of Malvina and his daughter could not prevent the ſpeedy re-union of his riotous and debauched companions, yet, at times, it might have been rather an obſtacle to their frequent meetings, as Malvina was regarded by him in the light of a cenſor.—For that reaſon, he immediately informed her ſhe muſt provide herſelf with another abode.—Malvina, perfectly ſatisfied with the delightfu privilege of taking with her the child of her beloved friend, was rejoiced to have it in her power, to quit a houſe, where her feelings were ſhocked, on beholding the indecent mirth of ſuch unthinking beings, take place of mourning, and which ſhe conſidered, and deeply felt as an inſult to her grief, and the memory of her valued friend.—While ſhe was conſidering what courſe to take, conſcious that ſhe

ſhe was too young to live alone, and likewiſe that her fortune would not permit her to take a houſe; at the ſame time ſhe was perfectly aſſured, from her knowledge of the character of Lord Sheridan, that ſhe could not expect much from him, towards the education of his daughter; ſhe enjoyed a ſecret ſatisfaction in the idea, that ſhe alone, would have the pleaſure of ſupporting and educating the child of her Clara.

In this uncertainty, ſhe reſolved to write to a relation of her mother's, who reſided in the north of Scotland; informing her of her ſituation, her taſte for retirement, and her deſire of her reſiding with her, on the ſtipend ſhe mentioned. Mrs. Burton, returned her an anſwer, wherein ſhe accepted her propoſal with pleaſure, and on her own terms: that having long been neglected by her family, ſhe ſhould rejoice to puniſh their neglect; and though ſhe had frequently been the

dupe of ſuch complaiſance, it ſhould never prevent her from conſidering it as one of her firſt pleaſures; if ſhe could be ſerviceable to her fellow creatures, or protect, or aſſiſt her relations.

At another time, Malvina would have thought very different of the manner in which Mrs. Burton had accepted her requeſt; but in the preſent ſtate of her mind, the grief by which ſhe was abſorbed, did not permit her time to reflect on it. She was anxious to leave a houſe where ſhe had enjoyed the only happy hours of her life; ſhe muſt no longer ſhed tears over the cold clay which covered the remains of her Clara. She muſt bid an eternal adieu to that tomb, which was the only memento that remained to tell ſhe had once exiſted.

It was there, ſhe was renewing the vows ſhe made of devoting her life to the care and education of her Fanny, and never

ver to divide her affection with any other object.—A vow, though raſh, dictated by the fervor of an exalted friendſhip, and which maternal affection received with tranſport; and the heartfelt ſatisfaction of having ſweetened the laſt moments of her friend, occaſioned Malvina to renew it with the moſt pious enthuſiaſm.—She was repeating it, when Tomkins, her maid, came to fetch her from the tomb. She permitted herſelf to be conducted in ſilence to the carriage which was waiting for them, which as ſoon as ſhe had entered, her tears ceaſed to flow. —There are ſorrows that ſink ſo deep into the heart, that they are neither to be expreſſed by tears or complaints; but whoſe deep ſource ſilently corrodes life's vital current.

It was the latter end of the month of *November.* The trees were deſpoiled *of their* decorations, and the uniform *mantle of* ſnow which covered the earth,

preſented to the eye a monotonous and inanimate picture of deſolation. The extreme cold, kept every perſon under their own roof, the roads appeared deſerted, and the villages as they paſſed, ſeemed uninhabited.—The birds were ſilent, and the waters at reſt in their icy priſons.—The howlings of the north winds alone interrupted the univerſal ſilence. They alone informed the world, that the repoſe of nature was not that of death. But ſuch ſcenes were pleaſing to Malvina, they were in ſympathy with her grief—though they were leſs gloomy than her mourning, and leſs melancholy than her ſoul.—Abſorbed by a train of the deepeſt reflections, her eye wandered over every ſucceſſive ſcene without fixing on any object.—Every thing became to her a ſource of afflicting reflections.

Alas, ſaid Malvina, mentally, yet a few months, and all nature will be renovated; the trees will recover their verdure, the flowers

flowers their perfume; a ſecret fire ſtill circulates in the ſap, and they all retain life—though apparently dead. Ah, how different is the grief-worn mind! which neither the winter's froſt, or the roſes bloom can alter; Nature can effect no change in me, all ſeems immutable in my ſoul.

Tomkins, Peter an old French domeſtic, and the little Frances, were the companions of Malvina's journey. She inſiſted on Peter's getting into the carriage, chuſing rather to retard her journey in the day, than permit him to be expoſed to the ſevere cold.—Both her attendants were ſenſible of the kindneſs and ſituation of their miſtreſs: neither he or Tomkins offered to interrupt the ſilence, and they reſpected her too much, to attempt conſoling her.—It was at laſt interrupted by little Frances, who, when not aſleep, aſked a thouſand artleſs queſtions of Malvina and the good old ſer-

vant. Malvina liſtened with attention to the ſound of her voice, which already reſembled her mothers, and cauſed every fibre of Malvina's heart to thrill, with painful recollections, and yet produced the only pleaſure ſhe was capable of feeling.

After a journey of ten days, Malvina arrived at the place of her deſtination, in the county of ———, which ſeparates the north of Scotland from the ſouth.—The caſtle of Mrs. Burton was ſituated a few miles from ———, whoſe Gothic grandeur was increaſed by the lofty mountains covered with ſnow, which towered above it; the immenſe lake of Tay which bathed its walls, rendered its ſituation wildly ſublime.

Malvina felt a ſecret pleaſure as ſhe ſurveyed the country of her favorite bard, Oſſian, where his name was yet remembered with a wild enthuſiaſm.—Partial to

thoſe writings, ſhe fancied ſhe beheld the form of her loved friend in the miſts which ſurrounded her. The wind murmured on the heath, it ſeemed as if the ſhade was advancing; ſhe liſtened to the diſtant ruſhing of the torrent, and imagined ſhe could diſtinguiſh the groans of her friend. Her ſickly imagination was filled with the phantoms which had once been; and of the inhabitants of the country which ſhe had travelled through.

Her name, which was the ſame as that of the daughter-in-law of Oſſian, ſeemed to ſanction the intereſt which ſhe felt, as ſhe revolved in her mind the picture of other times in this country, though faded by the touch of time.—It was not however to be imputed as a fault to Malvina, feeling in this manner, for poſſeſſing one of thoſe ardent and exalted minds which always are attracted by the ſublime and wonderful; and who are ever ſeeking it, and too often loſe themſelves in the purſuit.—

Tender

Tender and melancholy grief alone ſeemed to withdraw her mind, and uſurp it entirely.—In her happier days, her imagination was lively and brilliant; but even then it did not appear in words—it was the heart alone that ſpake.

'Twas near nine o'clock in the evening when ſhe arrived at Mrs. Burton's; all nature was wrapped in ſilent darkneſs. The poſtillion advanced near the margin of the wide ditch which ſurrounded the caſtle, and they perceived the draw-bridge was already drawn up. Peter, uneaſy that his miſtreſs ſhould be kept ſo late in theſe dangerous roads, haſtily alighted, to endeavour to find a paſſage to the walls. After groping ſome time in the dark, he found a narrow foot-path which lead to the walls, and was terminated by a ſmall gate, barricadoed with iron. He knocked violently, without effect, though the noiſe which was echoed back, reverberated from

from mountain to mountain; and for a moment diſturbed the profound ſilence which reigned around, and as it died away, univerſal ſtillneſs again reſumed its empire. He exerted all his ſtrength to mount the bars of the gate, and catching hold of ſome branches of ivy which covered it, he found a rope, which he pulled with violence. The deep and heavy ſound of a bell to which it belonged, reſounded in the caſtle, and ſeemed to put all within in motion: they ſoon heard voices calling, and anſwering, and could diſtinguiſh lights from different quarters, whoſe brightneſs gleamed on the ſurrounding darkneſs. The weight of the heavy gates groaned on their hinges—the bridge was let down, and Malvina's carriage rolled into the court. Mrs. Burton waited in the veſtibule; on ſeeing Malvina, ſhe appeared much ſurpriſed; but quickly recovering herſelf, ſhe ſaid, with much politeneſs and affability, that a long journey, undertaken at ſuch a ſevere time

of

of the ſeaſon, required much reſt, and that ſhe would take the liberty of conducting her to her apartment, before ſhe introduced her to the company who were at preſent in the caſtle.

As this was exactly what Malvina moſt deſired, ſhe followed her couſin to the chamber which was appropriated for her. Mrs. Burton would not enter into converſation with her, fearful ſhe might encreaſe her fatigue, and after having made her take ſome refreſhment, ſhe inſiſted on her retiring to reſt, telling her, though ſhe earneſtly wiſhed to be better acquainted, and enjoy the pleaſure of her ſociety, yet ſhe ſhould deprive herſelf of that ſatisfaction, that Malvina might devote a few days to recover from her fatigue.

She accompanied thoſe words by fixing on Malvina a look, which expreſſed much uneaſineſs; which Malvina, being overpowered by her own melancholy reflections,

tions, did not obſerve, and returned her acknowledgments to Mrs. Burton for the liberty ſhe ſo kindly gave her, conſcious, that for ſome time, general converſation would be very irkſome, and would be a puniſhment ſhe could not ſupport. As ſoon as ſhe had put her little Frances to bed, ſhe wiſhed her couſin a good night, when, perhaps, from the fatigue of her journey, and the continual agitation ſhe had experienced for ſome months, acted as a ſoporific to her harraſſed mind, and produced a few hours quiet repoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

PORTRAIT.

UNHAPPY Malvina! Thou for ſome hours may'ſt ceaſe to ſuffer; ſleep has ſpread his balmy covering over thy deep wound, and for ſome moments at leaſt thou may'ſt forget thou art alone in the world. But if it is true that dreams are influenced by the thoughts of the day, then, you yet are miſerable! However, during this apparent moment of peace, I will endeavour to give a ſketch of that admirable woman, whoſe mind, qualities, and figure, formed a tout enſemble that can only belong to herſelf, two of whom are ſeldom, if ever, found in the world.

But

But can I do her juſtice by deſcription? There are terms for beauty, grace, and wit; but for that undefinable charm which penetrates, ſubdues, and captivates, that dwells only in the ſoul, and yet gains the love and attention of all, even to overlook her foibles; how can I delineate ſuch? It is not by ſaying what it is, but what inſpired Malvina, that would pourtray her. It is not the eulogiums which attend the mention of her name, but the emotion with which it was pronounced, that could give the idea. Thoſe who were admitted to her confidence, who could ſee and hear her, can alone feel it, and muſt think of her with very different ſentiments from every other: though the captivating charm is nameleſs, for that which pleaſed above every other in her, is not to be delineated.

With great wit, ſhe poſſeſſed ſomething ſo ſuperior to it, that it paſſed unregarded, and while moſt women are ſo vain of the

the praiſe which is laviſhed on them, on that account, Malvina would have loſt much, if her's had been noticed. I do not pretend to aſſert, that the penſive Malvina was faultleſs, but, in her, it appeared to encreaſe her attractions. It was no particular charm or quality that was remarkable in her, for, except that uniform goodneſs, where ſo many virtues were blended and united, not one appeared prominent in her character, becauſe all were in harmony.

Malvina poſſeſſed that innate complaiſance which politeneſs in vain endeavours to imitate. It was neither from effort or deſign, but becauſe the pleaſure of others was always dearer to her than her own. She was as obliging to a ſtranger as a friend; it was only in the receſſes of the heart, that ſhe cheriſhed and retained her affection for thoſe ſhe valued. Thoſe alone, who were beloved by Malvina, knew this, and the extent to which her ideas

ideas of friendſhip were raiſed. Thoſe whom ſhe favoured with that ſacred title, might truly ſay they were beloved; ſhe felt and inſpired thoſe genuine ſentiments which are not either known or underſtood, and are perfectly unfaſhionable in the preſent world; but ſuch were Malvina's, that ſhe would ſacrifice both life and fortune without reſerve. In ſhort, to finiſh the picture of Malvina, I ſhall not enlarge on her benevolence, and kindneſs, for the ſubject would be inexhauſtible; nor on the delight ſhe experienced in being the ſecret author of happineſs and proſperity to others. If it is a truth that we were endowed with virtues by the Supreme Being, to ſerve as a light to direct us to know, and approach nearer to him; who then could have more confidence, and feel ſo deeply, the exiſtence of a God and a Saviour, as Malvina? It was her ſincere piety alone which made her regard this life only, as it gave the promiſe of a better.

Though

Though from nature endowed with a tender, and even a paſſionate heart, Malvina had never loved. Habituated from her infancy to live with her friend, in the enjoyment of that friendſhip, ſhe placed all her felicity, and never felt the exiſtence of any other affection. Perhaps a ſerious paſſion might have convinced her of her error, but the man to whom ſhe had been united, was not calculated to inſpire ſuch a one; not ſo much from the diſproportion of their ages, as uncongeniality of character. Malvina derived no advantage from the ill-ſuited union, yet it evinced the ſweetneſs and gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, by her uniform manner of ſuſtaining it. She was gratified, by having obtained the entire confidence of her huſband; for though her beauty had attracted his ſenſes, her modeſty and gentleneſs rivetted his affection. Timid, modeſt, even when noticed, her chaſte eyes often caſt down, left her unconſcious that ſhe was the object of univerſal attention:

attention: as there were few women who ſurpaſſed her in beauty, there was not one who poſſeſſed ſuperior virtue.

Thoſe who had ſecretly loved her during her marriage, as ſoon as ſhe was at liberty, declared themſelves, and made her very advantageous propoſals; but her mind, fatigued by ſo long a tyranny, rather ſought repoſe than agitation. She neither wiſhed or deſired any other felicity than what friendſhip afforded; and Lady Sheridan was the ſelected of her heart. The moment ſhe was emancipated, ſhe flew to this beloved friend, and her being unhappy, ſerved to augment her tenderneſs.—Ah, who that has beheld thoſe whom they love, miſerable, or ſuffer in the ſlighteſt degree, but what muſt have felt their affection increaſe? Thus had Malvina attained her twenty-fifth year without having felt the power of love: not that ſhe was incapable of feeling it, for ſhe was the *ſoul of ſenſibility*;

but

but being ſo long a ſtranger to that paſſion, ſhe imagined herſelf invincible.—Alas! why was it not permitted, that ſhe ſhould ever remain ignorant of its undermining power? She fancied that ſentiment could have no effect on her, and had reſolved to reſiſt its influence. For ſhe had promiſed to be a mother to her little Frances, and her whole life ſhe thought ſhould be devoted to the performance of this duty; conſequently, every thing that in the leaſt interfered with it, ſhe conſidered as a crime! With this diſpoſition, nothing could have been more eligible to her than the retreat ſhe had choſen; the idea of living remote from the world, where ſhe might freely indulge her ſorrows, and attend to her darling charge, had ſpread a ſoothing calm over her agitated ſoul.

CHAP. III.

A MORE PERFECT ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE CHARACTERS.

IT was late the next morning when Malvina aroſe: as ſoon as ſhe was dreſſed, ſhe looked round her apartment, then looking from the caſements, ſhe was enchanted with the different views which they preſented of natures ſcenery. The blue lake, obſcured by the miſts which were ſlowly riſing from its boſom, which prevented the eye from tracing its extent. On one ſide, mountains covered with foreſts of black firs, whoſe towering heads bid defiance to the *fury of the* ſtorm;

rſperſed by deep glens, in the boſom
/hich ruſhed impetuous torrent, whoſe
:ſſant roar was contraſted by the ſilence
ch reigned at the foot of the moun-
s, which bordered the lake, whoſe
: was laden by enormous maſſes of
ıite, piled on each other, without the
lleſt veſtige of vegetation, afforded
penſive eye the image of chaos and
)lation only.

/hile Malvina was gazing attentively
his ſcene, ſhe was interrupted by a
:e which ſeemed intereſted in her
:are. On turning from the window,
perceived Mrs. Burton in the moſt
ant undreſs, who ſmilingly ſaid, ah,
fair couſin, you muſt not expect to
in this rude clime, the ever ſmiling
ery of France. It is there only, that
re diſplays all her beneficence; here,
)ehold only her ſeverity and rigour.
while we wait for the ſeaſon which
give a gayer appearance to our
mountains,

mountains, I have taken care to provide you with views by the beſt maſters of the Italian and Flemiſh ſchools. In my opinion, it is more pleaſing to contemplate the ſkies of Italy and France, in painting, than thoſe of Scotland, in reality. Malvina raiſed her eyes, and beheld many beautiful pieces, diſpoſed with much taſte, on the green paper which adorned her cabinet. Much affected by this attention, and attributing it to Mrs. B's goodneſs of heart, ſhe took her hand, at the ſame time, expreſſing to her couſin, her grateful ſenſe of her kindneſs. Theſe attentions inform me what you are, for the being who can be ſo delicately attentive to a ſtranger, muſt conſtitute the happineſs of all around her.

That at leaſt is what I aſpire to do, replied Mrs. Burton, and has been the principal inducement which prompted me to live in this ſeclusion. This eſtate being a lordſhip, has *therefore* a number

of vaſſals; I protect and comfort them, and they regard me as the arbiter of their deſtiny. Malvina, though ſhe approved this arrangement, which Mrs. B. deſcribed and pronounced with no ſmall ſhare of ſelf complaiſance; yet ſhe did not feel the leaſt affected by it, and ſecretly reproached herſelf for not being more ſenſible of Mrs. B's. merit. Perhaps an obſerver leſs indulgent, or more enlightened, might have thought, that when goodneſs was made a boaſt, inſtead of being ſeen by actions, it may be honored it is true, but it never can be properly felt.

As you have ſo kindly permitted me (ſaid Malvina) to paſs ſome days in my apartment, I ſhall profit by your obliging indulgence, and continue alone, far from a world, which I have long ſince quitted. You are free, perfectly at liberty, couſin, interrupted Mrs. B.—I always wiſh my friends to feel themſelves at home when with

with me, and the more at their eaſe I obſerve them, the more agreeable it will be; and I certainly ſhall not make you an exception to this general rule. I will not aſk you to accompany me into the ſaloon, as I ſhall have for ſome days a ſociety which would only fatigue and diſtreſs you, as they are young people who are all very gay and noiſy.—But when we are en famille, I muſt inſiſt on your going down.

Malvina bowed, and her couſin left her: during ſeveral days ſhe ſaw very little of her, nor did ſhe regret the loſs.—Misfortune had elevated and increaſed her habitual devotion, and this diſpoſition ſo inherent to virtuous and ſenſible ſouls, made her cheriſh ſolitude with enthuſiaſm—Solitude has ever been the ſacred retreat of religion in all ages: but the good Tomkins did not like to ſee her miſtreſs perpetually confined to her apartment.—It appeared to her that a little diſſipation would be the only relief for ſorrow; *and ſhe thought it* very un-

kind in Mrs. B. to permit her couſin to ſit weeping alone, when there was ſo much gaity in the ſaloon.—She determined to ſpeak to Malvina when ſhe took in her breakfaſt.—Will you not go down ſtairs to day, madam? All the company depart to morrow, and if I might preſume to offer my advice, I think you would be amuſed below?—Ah! my good Tomkins, you too well know that I am not diſpoſed for amuſement. But, dear madam, if you would only try, beſides every one wiſhes ſo much to ſee you.—But I am not acquainted with any of the perſons who are there. That is of little conſequence; they have heard you mentioned, and are impatient to ſee you.—They have all queſtioned me, why does not your lady appear—Is it becauſe ſhe is ill? Why does ſhe conceal herſelf—Is it becauſe ſhe is ugly? And, when I anſwered this queſtion with diſdain, it redoubled their curioſity.—And do you imagine I ſhall quit my retirement to pleaſe ſuch beings?

beings?—Ah, ſaid little Frances, do tell mama who that pretty gentleman is, who wiſhes more than any body to ſee her; who played with me, and gave me ſweetmeats. That is Sir Edmond Burton, replied Tomkins, the nephew of Mrs. B. he is as handſome as an angel, and ſo affable and obliging to every perſon: it is true they ſay he is a very great libertine, but I know nothing of the matter, as I pay no attention to the idle tittle tattle of ſervants. You are perfectly right, replied her miſtreſs, avoid thoſe converſations as much as poſſible, if you wiſh to live in tranquillity.—My couſin appears to be an excellent woman, and as to that, madam, replied Tomkins, it is not what every one here ſays; for I have already heard ſuch things, but Heaven preſerve me from ſpeaking ill of my neighbours. I only wiſh that you, madam, would conſent to amuſe yourſelf a little; when I obſerve you ſo often weeping, I feel as if I was ten years older. My good Tomkins,

gently replied Malvina, leave me the choice of my amuſements I deſire, and reſt aſſured, that I experience more delight in my ſolitude, than I ſhould any where elſe. Tomkins ſhook her head without conviction, but not daring to urge her requeſt farther, ſhe retired in ſilence.

Two day after this converſation, Mrs. B. ſent to inform her couſin that ſhe ſhould expect the pleaſure of her company to take breakfaſt. Though this invitation was rather a reſtraint to Malvina, ſhe could not refuſe it, and on her going down, ſhe found Mrs. B. in the ſaloon, and breakfaſt ready. At laſt, my dear Malvina ſaid ſhe, all my viſitors are departed, and I can now enjoy the pleaſure of your company. I fear, anſwered Malvina, it will not ſuit you, and you will complain, not without reaſon, if you have no other ſociety than mine. Why do you think ſo, couſin? you appear very

very amiable! I am never entirely alone, and I will introduce you at dinner to thoſe who conſtantly reſide with me: but this morning I have reſerved you for myſelf. Malvina felt more conſtrained than gratified by this attention. She wiſhed to reply, but not having any thing to entertain her couſin with, ſhe was ſhocked at the idea of a converſation of ſo many hours to ſupport, and this idea augmented the difficulty. In this diſpoſition, ſhe was ſeated with a look of ſorrow near the fire, before a table, on which was ſerved a profuſion of delicacies.—Mrs. B. did not affectedly preſs her to eat, but only recommended what ſhe thought moſt agreeable, and endeavoured, by her gaiety, to enliven Malvina; who politely acknowledged her kindneſs, though fatigued by ſo much attention. She would have preferred neglect to thoſe officious ſervices which did not permit her a moments reſpite. Mrs. B. wiſhed to be thought very polite and affectionate,

yet her natural diſpoſition could not be concealed, and her attentions wanted that intereſting cordiality which immediately places every one at their eaſe.

Breakfaſt over, and the converſation exhauſted, Mrs. B. propoſed ſhewing Malvina the caſtle, which being accepted, ſhe firſt accompanied her to a ſaloon appropriated for muſic, where ſhe obſerved a variety of inſtruments of the moſt elegant kind. From thence, they proceeded to a ſpacious and well furniſhed library, which led into a long gallery of pictures: this was kept perfectly dry and warm from flues, which were branched in ſeveral directions, and united in one large ſtove near Mrs. B's. apartment, over which ſhe had conſtructed a green-houſe, where every exotic plant and flowers, were cultivated in the greateſt profuſion.—Where the roſe, orange, and hyacinth, exhaled their perfumes into her dreſſing room.—This little ſpot had the walls painted in freſco,

freſco, repreſenting a grove, intermixed with tufts of flowers, ſo well repreſented, that you might imagine you were in the fields. In the lower part of this gay aſſemblage, was an Ottoman, placed under an alcove, which was half concealed by a crape curtain, and ſeemed formed for the repoſe of voluptuouſneſs.

Though Malvina had always been accuſtomed to affluence in her own country, and alſo at Lady Sheridan's, yet, never had the reality of ſuch refined luxury ſtruck her ſight. It would have ſeemed incredible even at Paris, or London: what then muſt it have appeared when ſhe beheld ſuch luxury in the north of Scotland? What, thought Malvina, muſt ſuch a multiplicity of ornaments, and the whole of what I have ſeen, have coſt, beſides the continual care and attention they require? Malvina thought leſs than half of what had been expended here, would have founded a ſeminary or

hoſpital; as in ſo rude a place it would have been an unexpected bleſſing to the poor. This luxurious retreat, formed a contraſt which rather ſhocked than delighted a reflective mind.—Malvina was abſorbed by theſe ideas, when Mrs. B. as if ſhe had penetrated them, ſaid, my fair couſin, you appear ſurpriſed I obſerve, at what you have ſeen, not expecting ſo much luxury in this part of the world, and perhaps condemn me for having beſtowed ſo much of my attention on ſuch things: but, believe me, when I aſſure you I did not conſtruct this little paradiſe, till I had founded the moſt uſeful eſtabliſhments: I have in one of the wings of this caſtle, a ſchool for children; an infirmary for the ſick; and a forge, where utenſils of every kind are made, which I diſtribute gratis to the poor inhabitants of my eſtate. Ah! dear couſin, ſaid Malvina, much affected, this indeed compenſates for the too great elegance of your artificial paradiſe. We deſerve to

poſſeſs

poſſeſs pleaſures when we have firſt conſidered the welfare of others. But, may I hope to be gratified by beholding theſe admirable inſtitutions; here I may undoubtedly praiſe your taſte; but it is there only that we can appreciate it to your heart.

Though I wiſh to oblige you, replied Mrs. B. yet it is a rule which I never treſpaſs on, (and which I have made) never to viſit thoſe more frequently than twice in a month; I ſhould be fearful thoſe who ſuperintend them, might arrogate a licence to themſelves from my example, when they obſerved I did not abide by the rules which I had deſcribed; therefore, we will wait the appointed day. As you pleaſe, replied Malvina, ſurprized; but may I not be allowed to go there alone? No, my dear, I muſt not be deprived of the gratification of attending you, as it is a pleaſure I promiſe myſelf,

ſelf, and you will oblige me, not to go without me.

Malvina was ſilent, and preſſed it no farther, though ſhe could make no particular objection to the manners and converſation of Mrs. B. yet ſhe felt a ſecret diſlike towards her, which ſhe could not reſiſt. For though her heart was ſo ready to excuſe the failings of others, yet her mind was endowed with an intuitive power, and rapidity of ideas, that could penetrate in an inſtant into the ſecret motives of thoſe who converſed with her, before thought or reflection could ariſe. So inſtantaneous is the impreſſion received, that ſhe often condemned herſelf for theſe involuntary feelings, yet could not reſiſt their influence, or ſubdue them. In vain, by the force of reaſon, did ſhe perſuade herſelf of the injuſtice ſhe might be guilty of; but the feelings of her heart would not yield to her reaſon: and if it is eaſy to

deceive

deceive our judgment, it is not poſſible to overcome inſtinct.

As ſhe was leaving Mrs. Burton, the latter ſaid, my dear Malvina, I ſincerely wiſh that you would conſider yourſelf at home, and candidly inform me if you prefer dining in your own apartment; for though it may appear rather ſingular, that ſhall not be conſidered; as my only wiſh is to conform to whatever may contribute to your eaſe and ſatisfaction. Malvina was almoſt tempted to accept this agreeable propoſal, but a moments reflection convinced her, that, as ſhe would be obliged to give a portion of her time to gratify her couſin, ſhe determined to chuſe the hour of dinner, as the moſt convenient; and acknowledging the polite attention of Mrs. Burton, ſaid, ſhe was only fearful her company would be too melancholy, and affect the natural gaity of her party. If it is perfectly agreeable to you, my dear Malvina, I am ſatisfied; but

but let it be without the leaſt conſtraint, or elſe it will embitter all the pleaſure I enjoy in your ſociety? Beſides, why ſhould your ſorrows be thought diſagreeable to me? I am no ſtranger to grief; do not then, my fair couſin, be fearful of repoſing your's in my boſom; I have ſuffered ſufficient, to feel from experience, what ſorrows ſenſibility is the ſource of; therefore, you may believe, I can moſt ſincerely ſympathiſe with your's. Malvina believed, and was concerned to hear her couſin had experienced ſorrow; but ſhe felt (at the ſame time) that it was not to ſuch a character as Mrs. Burton's, ſhe would impart her's.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

SOME NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

THIS was the firſt time ſince Malvina had loſt her friend, that ſhe had ſupported a long converſation; fatigued by the exertion, ſhe was hurrying to her apartment, when, in turning into the gallery, ſhe was ſaluted by a man who appeared to be about thirty years of age, whoſe noble figure and appearance pourtrayed the gentleman; ſhe ſlightly returned his bow, and proceeded. This perſon, whoſe name was Prior, was the only

only one in the caſtle who had not expreſſed the leaſt curioſity to ſee Malvina. He could not, however, but be ſurprized at the ſight of her: the uncommon expreſſion of her penſive countenance, which no one ever beheld, without being intereſted in her favor. When ſhe had paſſed, Mr. Prior looked after her till ſhe turned out of the gallery which lead to her own apartment; he ſtopt for an inſtant, and could not help dwelling on the idea ſhe inſpired, and experienced a ſenſation of pleaſure, in being under the ſame roof with ſo apparently amiable and intereſting a being.

Mr. Prior was deſcended from a noble family in Scotland; his parents having many children, and only a ſlender fortune, had educated him for the profeſſion of a clergyman, which perfectly coincided with his wiſhes; being paſſionately fond of ſtudy and polite literature; and this allowed him to devote himſelf to his favourite

vourite purſuit. But this was not the beſt road to gain preferment in the world:—ſelfiſhneſs and diſſimulation gain far infinitely more than either fine abilities or rectitude: and Mr. Prior, with the moſt correct principles—a mind highly cultivated, and a heart and morals, the moſt pure, could not gain a ſituation which was ſufficient to afford him a maintenance. Chance, however, procured him the acquaintance of Mrs. Burton, in a journey ſhe made to Edinburgh. She had ſenſe ſufficient to appreciate the merit of ſuch a being as Mr. Prior; and flattered with the idea of gaining a man of noble family to reſide with her, ſhe made him the offer of being chaplain to her family, at the caſtle, with a ſalary of one hundred guineas per annum. Prejudiced in favour of Mrs. Burton, from her affability and politeneſs, accompanied by the delightful hope of dedicating all his leiſure to ſtudy, he accepted her offer with rapture.—Charmed with the ſolitary and retired

ſituation

ſituation of his new aſylum; his aſtoniſhment on beholding the luxuries of its interior, exceeded Malvina's; and the elegance and grandeur of this caſtle created ſuſpicions in him, which experience ſoon proved were not without foundation. But he never divulged his opinion of Mrs. Burton to any perſon: Malvina alone may have the power of gaining his unlimited confidence.

When Malvina went down to dinner, ſhe found in the ſaloon, Mr. Prior, and two ladies; and who, on entering, regarded her with ſcrutinizing curioſity. Mrs. B. aroſe, and met her, then ſaid, permit me, my dear couſin, to introduce you to the friends of my retirement, who will be delighted by the acquiſition of your company? Firſt, I will preſent Mr. Prior, the chaplain of my caſtle, whoſe noble birth is his leaſt merit; the duties he ſo kindly performs here, are infinitely beneath his abilities, and I am thankful his

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ill fortune allowed him to favour me, by accepting this trifling office. This, continued Mrs. B. turning to an elderly lady about fifty, is Mrs. Melmor, an old friend of my mother's, the widow of a man of quality, who was ruined by a law-ſuit; ſhe has conſented to partake of my ſolitude, with her daughter, whom you obſerve with her; this young lady, though only ſeventeen, is very accompliſhed, and her talents may be ſerviceable to your little orphan. Malvina replied with much ſweetneſs, that ſhe ſhould be delighted to enjoy the pleaſure the young lady's accompliſhments would afford, for her own amuſement; but would be extremely ſorry to employ one moment of her time in the painful taſk of inſtructing an infant, as ſuch a duty ought to devolve entirely on the mother. But, if I am not deceived, Madam, interrupted Mrs. Melmor, this young lady is not your daughter? No madam, replied Malvina, ſuppreſſing her tears; but her misfortunes have rendered

dered her dearer to me than a daughter. Ah! I underſtand—her mother was your friend, and you have adopted this lovely child at her death. I entreat you not to interrogate my couſin on this delicate ſubject, ſaid Mrs. B. I have never yet dared to mention it; I am but too ſenſible of the pain it would inflict, was I to touch on the ſource of thoſe wounds, which time alone can ameliorate. There are ſuch alſo, ſaid Malvina, which are ſo deep, that even the wing of time can have no influence over them; they are incurable. Do not deſpair of any thing, my dear, ſaid Mrs. B. gently kiſſing her cheek, we ſhall ſee ſome day what my zealous friendſhip for you can accompliſh.

During this converſation, Mr. Prior remained ſilent, and had been engaged in obſerving Malvina. Her pale and dejected countenance appeared to him the moſt intereſting in the world, each ſentence

tence that ſhe uttered, vibrated to his heart; and he wondered how it was poſſible any one could wiſh to interrupt the ſweet, ſoft tone of her voice. He recalled in idea, the moſt intereſting women he had ſeen, but not one could be compared to Malvina. Miſs Melmor was the firſt who perceived, or at leaſt who noticed, the abſtraction of his mind. I am much deceived, ſaid ſhe, if the melancholy of Malvina de Sourcy has not already attached Mr. Prior; and I believe he could at this moment weep with her, at the ſombre idea of his future misfortunes. What then will he feel when ſhe relates her ſorrows to him?—And why! do you apprehend that I am ignorant of them, replied Mr. Prior, with quickneſs? Her expreſſion, her air, her phyſiognomy; are not all theſe the moſt eloquent interpreters of grief? Ah! if the unfortunate had only words to expreſs the language of their ſorrow, they would never be underſtood.

Malvina

Malvina, who had overheard this ſhort converſation, raiſed her eyes to Mr. Prior, with an expreſſion of approbation; ſhe had not noticed him before, and on obſerving him, ſhe was prepoſſeſſed in his favour. His phyſiognomy, though grave and ſevere, at once expreſſed goodneſs, and an uncommon ſhare of ſenſibility, which could not eſcape the penetrating eye of Malvina. To diſcover his peculiar character, ſhe muſt have judged from her own. But this, Miſs Melmor could never have diſcerned, even if ſhe had paſſed her life with Mr. Prior. During dinner, ſhe queſtioned Malvina concerning the various amuſements of London: I am almoſt a ſtranger to them, ſhe replied, as Lady Sheridan never frequented any public amuſement, except to pleaſe her Lord, which he ſeldom required; and I never went without her. Ah, my God! replied Miſs Melmor, how was it poſſible ſhe could make ſo melancholy a uſe of her liberty, as to deprive herſelf of balls, public

public places, and every other amuſement? I acknowledge freely, it is all the delicacy I deſire. Believe me, interrupted Mrs. Burton, it is poſſible to relinquiſh them very early; I have enjoyed them in the moſt unlimited degrees; in my youth; I have been ſurrounded with all that the moſt unbounded ſelf-love could wiſh, or exult in; but I withdrew from theſe illuſions as ſoon as I experienced their emptineſs. I left the world before I was left by it. In vain did its alluring ſcenes endeavour to recall me to its fleeting pleaſures; I reſolutely reſiſted every temptation and perſuaſion, and determined to conſecrate my future days to the real enjoyment of benevolence and friendſhip: and I find my happineſs augmented, ſince I have perſevered in ſeeking only real pleaſures, which my preſent life can only produce.

Mrs. Melmor was profuſe in her eulogiums on the *ſuperior wiſdom* of her

friend. Malvina thought them ſo ext
vagant, that ſhe was at a loſs in w
manner to reply, and continued ſile
particularly when ſhe obſerved, by
expreſſion of Mr. Prior's countenan
that he with difficulty ſuppreſſed a ſm
which ſurpriſed her, as ſhe had inwar
applauded her couſin. But all theſe flo
ing images of the mind were ſoon obli
rated by the quick return of the mel
choly recollections which corroded
heart; and when the repaſt was conclud
ſhe obtained permiſſion to retire.

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CHAP. V.

THE LIBRARY.

MALVINA, not having brought any books with her, went one morning to requeſt her couſin's permiſſion to take one from the library. My [illegible] ſaid Mrs. B. as I never purchaſe any, but the beſt editions, I have made it a rule, never to lend them to my own ſex, for in general they are ſo careleſs of them: but I ſhall make an exception in your favor, and you have the liberty to ſelect thoſe that are the moſt agreeable to you. Malvina thanked her, without being gratified, on receiving a favor ſo un-

graciouſly conferred; which was only to enhance the obligation, which is ſometimes more mortifying than a refuſal.

She determined to benefit by this very *great condeſcenſion* as ſeldom as poſſible. She went to the library on returning to her chamber, and obſerving that part which contained all the French authors, ſhe looked at them as the friends of her youth. It was with Lady Sheridan, that ſhe had ſpent the ſweeteſt moments of her life. She wept at the ſight of her favorite Montague, her imagination immediately tranſported her to France, under the paternal roof, where ſhe firſt read his Eſſay on Friendſhip. She and her beloved Clara, attentively liſtened as her father read; at each ſentiment that ſpoke to the heart, their eyes met, and ſeemed to expreſs, it is there that we ſhall prove its truth: but their timid lips had not yet uttered this in language. A *ſecret delicacy*, the natural attendant of

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the firſt ſenſations of the ſoul, reſerved its ardour in the receſſes of their hearts. Aſtoniſhed and delighted, as their reaſon expanded, nature all beautiful, nature appeared more ſo to them, when they together admired her various and wonderful productions. The flowers appeared more brilliant and lovely, when they gathered them for each other. Happy in their affections, they gave themſelves up without controul, to the delightful ſenſations which it inſpired, without inveſtigating the ſource of the felicity they enjoyed. They experienced without interruption, all the innocent delight of that [illegible] age. Friendſhip, pure and ingenuous, poſſeſſes all that delicate reſerve, and all the charms that attend the moſt refined love. Theſe recollections ſucceeded each other with ſuch rapidity in the mind of Malvina, that each, as it croſſed the path of memory, increaſed her melancholy, and touched every chord of her ſenſible heart. She mournfully ejaculated,

culated, as her tears fell in profuſion, Oh! thou firſt moments of my exiſtence, tranſporting moments, though ſo quickly vaniſhed, ever to be regretted, though ſo tranſient; yet, how very deep are the traces in the region of memory, and never to be obliterated! While ſhe was yet ſpeaking, the door opened, and Mr. Prior appeared with ſome books, which he brought to replace. On ſeeing Malvina, he bowed reſpectfully, and drew back, with an intention to retire. But Malvina quickly recollecting herſelf, made a motion with her hand, her heart being too full for utterance; ſhe only ſaid in a low voice, do not let my being here prevent your entrance, I am going. Mr. Prior, obſerving her as ſhe paſſed him, with her face averted; joined his hands, and raiſing them, exclaimed, O Heaven, are theſe the creatures whom thou chaſtiſeſt, While the wicked are permitted to proſper, and poſſeſs every luxury, and even more than their hearts can deſire? Affect-

ed

at by this involuntary exclamation, Malvina turned to Mr. Prior, as ſhe was juſt quitting the library, and her eyes ſtill bathed in tears, Yes, anſwered ſhe, I have been, and am chaſtiſed; yet I flattered myſelf I had lived innocent, and did not know I deſerved ſo ſevere a puniſhment.

Do not murmur, replied he, againſt that Being, who only knows what is beſt for us. Supplicate his mercy, and he will liſten to, and comfort you; for He reſides with the humble and contrite heart. He never conceals his face from the ſevere trials of the afflicted, and He alone can heal their wounds. I feel and obſerve, ſaid Malvina, that you are both good and compaſſionate, and that your habit has not deceived me, when I imagined, you were deſtined to be the ſupport and comfort of the diſtreſſed, and a father to the unhappy. Ah! replied Mr. Prior, if I could flatter myſelf with ſo pleaſing a hope as that of contributing

in the leaſt, to ſoothe and conſole your care worn mind, that day alone, would be one of the happieſt of my life. I ſhall ſeem in your eyes, perhaps, one of the weakeſt of thoſe confided to your care, replied Malvina, but I accept with gratitude your pious endeavours; they may probably teach me, to ſupport this living death, which ſeems to have left me alone in the world. It is not in me that you will find it, ſaid Mr. Prior, but in the ſublime recollection, which has been the only conſolation of all Chriſtians, which is the hope of immortality; the anchor of the ſoul in this tabernacle of duſt, where we are inceſſantly endangered, and buffetted by the ſtorms of paſſion. Death is only changing our earthly dwelling; endeavour to detach your regards as much as poſſible from this vale of miſery, and elevate them to that reſting place, which was not conſtructed by the hands of men: but which will continue to all eternity! and there continued he, (his voice faultering

ering from ſympathy and feeling) you will again meet, and be re-united to your much-loved friend.

Ah! replied Malvina, I feelingly acknowledge your converſation is a conſolation to me! I certainly never had a doubt, that if we had been created for this life only, God would never have made us to be unhappy. When I reflect on the ſublime ſtate to which we are deſtined, (if deſerving) my heart ceaſes to murmur; and I am overpowered with the deepeſt gratitude. This ſentiment, which you have awakened, I ſhall reflect on with pleaſure; and am ſincerely grateful for the ſatisfaction your converſation has afforded me.

Malvina, delighted in having found a friend who could underſtand her, promiſed herſelf much pleaſure in the ſociety of Mr. Prior, and went to dinner with more ſatisfaction. She found Mrs. Mel-

mor in the ſaloon, ſeated at an embroidering frame, and her daughter, reading a pamphlet, who, as Malvina came up to her, haſtily cloſed it. Well Kitty, ſaid her mother, ſhall you be ready to give Mrs. Burton an account of what ſhe gave you to read? Certainly mama, and if ſhe does not require more from others, than ſhe does from herſelf, I think I ſhall deſerve ſome praiſe.—But thoſe who wiſh all for themſelves, never have any to beſtow on others. What is that you ſay, Kitty?—You forget whom you are ſpeaking before? Indeed mama, I do not know how you bear continual contradiction, but as to myſelf, the life one leads here, and the lectures I am conſtrained to hear, renders it ſo tireſome, that I cannot any longer diſguiſe it.

And why ſhould you, ſaid Malvina? pleaſure and gaity are the concomitants of your age, and Mrs. B. is too juſt to be offended at your little murmurings. If

ſhe muſt be aſtoniſhed, cried Miſs Melmor, ſpeaking very quick, it is not in my power to leſſen her ſurpriſe, but, can ſhe ever forgive the unpardonable fault of my being diſpleaſed in her houſe? She is already but too willing to render me the object of her caprice, and more ſo, ſince Sir Edmond Burton was laſt here, becauſe he particularly noticed me. Not that I value the preference of Sir Edmond, as I well know what an inconſtant he is; he is not capable of loving any woman, as he pays the ſame attention, and the ſame compliments to all, that he does to me. But was he even to become otherwiſe, which I do not think poſſible, am I not perfectly certain, that Mrs. Burton would never permit her nephew to make any other choice than the perſon whom ſhe has ſelected; and you will ſee, mama, that the fortune ſhe has promiſed me, will be given on no other condition, than my marrying the man whom ſhe may think moſt proper for me. Her mother ſeized the

firſt moment ſhe ſtopped to breathe, by deſiring her to be ſilent, in a tone at once emphatic and commanding. Be ſilent, Kitty, and learn to reſpect the generous friend who has given us an aſylum. Ah! my good mama, how wonderfully ſcrupulous you are juſt now, replied her giddy daughter, have I not heard you ſay, a thouſand times more? That may be, ſaid Mrs. Melmor, colouring with anger, but you will allow I knew to whom I was ſpeaking.

I hope, madam, ſaid Malvina, gravely, you do not ſuſpect that I ſhall make an improper uſe of what I have heard? I may be aſtoniſhed, but that is all. I believe, I undoubtedly believe you, replied Mrs. Melmor, much ſoftened: a perſon who poſſeſſes ſo many virtues, cannot want diſcretion.—Yet, I wiſh to break my daughter of ſpeaking ſo freely before perſons whom ſhe does not know; for you muſt be ſenſible how guarded we ought

to

to be, when we complain of thoſe to whom we owe every thing. No, madam, I never have felt that ſenſation, replied Malvina, cooly, for I think we ſhould never even wiſh to receive any thing from thoſe we do not eſteem. Mrs. Melmor was juſt going to anſwer, when Mrs. Burton entered.

Good day, my dear friends, ſaid ſhe, I am charmed to find you together, and regret that I have loſt ſo many pleaſing moments of your company; but I hope at leaſt, I was preſent in your remembrance. Did you think of me? Can you doubt it, replied Mrs. Melmor, in the ſofteſt tone poſſible? Are you not the ſoul of us all? Theſe flattering words obtained a gracious ſmile from Mrs. B. and a look of contempt from Malvina. At this inſtant, Mr. Prior entered with a roll of papers in his hand. What have you brought us, enquired Mrs. Burton? All the gallic poetry I could collect, madam.

Oh!

Oh! dear, interrupted Miſs Melmor, how can you have the patience to read all thoſe dull rhodomantades? And how can you beſtow ſuch an epithet on the ſublime works, which has immortaliſed the name of Oſſian, cried Mr. Prior? Is there ſuch an inſtance in memory, of any one, who, in the midſt of ſuch wild mountains, has rendered his genius ſo known: for when the hand of deſolating time, ſhall have deſtroyed every other veſtige, they will remain to tell the tale of other times. He ſurely may be termed the Sun of ancient Caledonia, ſince no one can extinguiſh thoſe rays of glory which beam from the illuſtrious ſon of Fingal? Are you not afraid? What, that the ſpirit of the hills, mounted on a courſer of vapour, ſhould transfix me with his meteor lance; interrupted Miſs Melmor, with a ſatirical laugh. No really, not I indeed; when the evening draws in, and the winds howl through the dark foreſt, the meteors riſe from the boſom of the lake; the dogs

bark

lurk in the lower court; all theſe, I ſuppoſe, denote the anger of Oſſian, which I am to be frightened at.

Miſs Kitty, ſaid Mrs. B. with ſome hauteur, in ſpeaking of ſuch works, it requires a mind capable of feeling their beauties; you likewiſe ſhould have read much more of it than you have, before you attempt to criticiſe. In that caſe, ſaid Miſs Melmor, in a whiſper, leaning towards Malvina, ſhe had much better not ſay any thing. Without having heard this, Mrs. Burton was ſhocked at the action; and Mrs. Melmor, who obſerved the diſpleaſure of her friend, endeavoured to ſoften it, by accuſing her daughter firſt. I have frequently told you, my dear Mrs. Burton, that your uncommon indulgence to Kitty, would produce a bad effect; but you would never believe me, and between ourſelves, if your complexion and beauty, could permit us to ſuppoſe it, you would be the moſt likely to be taken for

her

her mother, as the affections of your heart are ſo lively and generous. It is indeed your own fault, my dear Mrs. Burton, allow me to ſay ſo, with that frankneſs which is ſo natural to my character. We are not always capable of controuling our feelings, my dear, replied her friend, it is only thoſe who poſſeſs exquiſite ſenſations, that do not wiſh to check them, and who are ever the victims of their ſenſibility.

Does Madame de Sorcy know the work we are ſpeaking of, enquired Mr. Prior? at the ſame time preſenting her the collection he had brought. I have read the French tranſlation. You do not then know Oſſian? You would not know him, even after you had read that of Macpherſon, nor that I have here: if difficulties are not repulſing to you, permit me the pleaſure of inſtructing you in the Erſe language, that you may, when the fine weather commences, hear the deſcendants

endants of Morven, ſing the exploits of their fathers, in all the purity of their native language. Malvina accepted this propoſal with infinite pleaſure; Mrs. Burton alſo ſaid, ſhe ſhould be very happy to take ſome leſſons, and would therefore the next morning, meet her couſin and Mr. Prior, in the library.

In the evening, Mrs. Burton received a letter, which apparently intereſted her very much; ſhe read it ſeveral times, and often looked at Miſs Melmor with diſpleaſure. Malvina being near her, heard her in a low voice, ſay, what can be the reaſon of his coming here again? At laſt, after a long pauſe, ſhe folded the letter, and ſaid Edmond informs me, that he will be here in a few days. Really, cried Miſs Melmor, in a tone of tranſport; Mrs. Burton looking at her with ſeverity, added, I imagine that he comes on purpoſe to conſult me relative to ſome particulars concerning his marriage with

Lady

Lady Summerhill; as I hope he will at laſt ſubmit to my pleaſure, as he muſt be ſenſible of the advantages which he will derive from ſuch an eſtabliſhment: I do not ſuppoſe any perſon here will have the temerity to endeavour to perſuade him otherwiſe. Miſs Melmor bluſhed, and her mother looked at her with apprehenſion: Mr. Prior was abſorbed; and Mrs. B. appeared much agitated: Malvina remained the only indifferent perſon in the company.

Punctual to the appointment of the next morning, in the library, Malvina found Mr. Prior. They converſed while waiting for Mrs. B. with ſo much earneſtneſs, that it did not appear late; ſhe ſoon after ſent, to beg ſhe might be excuſed for a few days, as ſhe had not time this morning, and the two following were appropriated to viſit the public eſtabliſhments in the caſtle. Malvina ſent to inform her ſhe would attend her, and was preparing

aring to retire, when Mr. Prior de-
:d her, by ſaying, why are you going
on? I think I have been here a long
(cried ſhe) perhaps you may think ſo;
he moments that I have paſſed with
are ſo ſweet, that they are as fleeting
e morning vapours, and fade like the
before the orb of day. I aſſure you
Prior, that I enjoy great pleaſure in
ſociety; and if it is true that con-
ıce can afford ſome conſolation to
ow, I believe it is from you only,
I ſhall receive it, during my reſidence
. As to the other perſons who are in
:aſtle, ſaid Mr. Prior, I do not even
e their good opinion; but, if it is
a congeniality of mind, and not only
a compariſon with others, then I
eſteem it as one of the greateſt
ings Heaven can beſtow on me.

alvina was ſurpriſed at what ſhe
d. The expreſſion of humility and
eſty, which Mr. Prior poſſeſſed, did

not

not appear to coincide with that opinion of ſuperiority, which he ſeemed to have; and while ſhe was reflecting what reply ſhe ſhould make, and endeavouring to develop this ſeeming paradox; the expreſſion of her countenance informed Mr. Prior of the purport of her ſoliloquy. He haſtily replied to her thoughts—you are aſtoniſhed, I obſerve, at the idea I appear to entertain of myſelf, and you are tempted to accuſe me of vanity; but it will not be long before you acknowledge your miſtake, and you will be ſenſible that I have a right to aſſert, that wit alone can never underſtand your character; and that your ſoul ought not to open itſelf, unleſs it met a congenial one. Malvina, more and more aſtoniſhed at a converſation, which ſeemed to accuſe Mrs. Burton of inſenſibility, particularly from a man who ought to conſider her as his benefactreſs, could not ſolve this ſeeming inconſiſtency in the character of Mr. Prior: and was on the point of withdrawing

drawing her eſteem from him; when reading in her eyes the various emotions which agitated her, he ſaid with quickneſs, in the name of Heaven, madam, ſuſpend your opinion, and do not abuſe the uncommon aſcendency you have gained over me; and judge me not with ſuch undeſerved ſeverity. I do not know how it has happened, that I have involuntarily betrayed a ſecret, which my moſt intimate friends, with repeated inquiries, have never been able to draw from me: and it has eſcaped me, before you, who never aſked it. But this fault if it is one, muſt not be attributed to me; it is only from the confidence you have inſpired; and it is only to you, that I ſhould be guilty of ſuch an indiſcretion, as there is no other but yourſelf in the world, who can reproach me with ſuch a fault.

Bad as your extenuation is, ſir, replied ſhe, perhaps I am the laſt that ought to think it ſo? And the confidence you repoſe

poſe in me, though premature, and perhaps imprudent, does not permit me the right of blaming her, who is the object of it: and if I do not cenſure you, how can you clear yourſelf from being unjuſt? Is it the generous Mrs. Burton, the benefactreſs of all who ſurround her, that we ought to accuſe with wanting a ſoul; of being void of ſenſibility. She who has deſpiſed and relinquiſhed the vain pleaſures of the world, that ſhe might, by her affluence, ſpread comfort, and mitigate the ſevere deſtiny of the miſerable inhabitants of this wild retreat. Does not this evince a noble and exalted principle of humanity and benevolence? If I cannot yield her my confidence, believe me, I rather attribute it to the difference there is between us, (a difference entirely to her advantage) than to the cauſe to which you ſeem to allude.

Amiable woman, exclaimed Mr. Prior, his eyes ſuffuſed with tears, I ſhould have

have been deceived in you, if you had not thought thus, at the same time, I shall be extremely deceived, if Mrs. Burton does not think the grief you feel and express, is merely the desire of being thought interesting:—for can we doubt the general ruling principle, that every one judges of another by their own heart.

If that is sufficient, replied Malvina, rising, I am still ignorant perhaps, of the motive of your unjust prejudice; but I shall be fearful, that I may imbibe a little, if I listen to you any longer. Permit me to say, that while I witness the excellent actions of Mrs. B. to all who surround her, even to those who condemn her, I must be unjustly prejudiced, to be blind to her merit. I am not ungrateful, madam, replied Mr. Prior, in a serious accent, I am not even severe; when you have observed more minutely, perhaps I may gain a place in your favor, and you may perhaps regret *the severe* invective

which

which you have conferred on me. On saying this, he immediately retired; Malvina remained confounded. Whatever proofs there were of Mr. Prior's being unjuſt, the pain ſhe was conſcious of having inflicted, which was not natural to her character voluntarily to do, created a ſenſation of ſorrow to her heart, which oppreſſed it—by the idea only. In the courſe of the evening, ſhe attempted to apologize to him, for the ſeverity of which ſhe had been guilty in the morning; but he only anſwered with diſtant politeneſs: appeared thoughtful, abſorbed, and retired early to his own apartment.

CHAP. VI.

THE HOSPITAL.

THE next day Malvina her cousin, and Mr. Prior, visited the infirmary, the school, and the forge. She took little Frances with her, that she might at that early age, imbibe in her heart, the sweet and gentle sensations of pity and benevolence. She was delighted with the order and regularity which she observed in the different establishments which she surveyed. But she marked with peculiar surprise, that the presence of Mrs. Burton, instead of creating the pleasure

which ſhe expected, appeared to inſpire only the ſenſations of fear. She was ſaluted with reſpect, inſtead of the warm effuſions of gratitude; and the countenances of the unhappy beings who ſurrounded her, had more expreſſion of terror, than the look of ſatisfaction, which expecting a favor, or receiving one, (if graciouſly conferred) generally produces.

Mrs. B. on her part, appeared more as if ſhe was performing a taſk, than giving or receiving pleaſure. She paſſed with the utmoſt indifference through the wards of the ſick; and if ſhe aſked any one a queſtion, it ſeemed rather with a deſign to make them remember who ſhe was, than to evince any intereſt in their welfare. She queſtioned them, without waiting for their anſwers. Every perſon appeared under a reſtraint; no one daring to complain, or relate their ſufferings to a perſon, who evinced ſo little inclination to liſten to them.

In

his manner they ſoon made a tour
gh all the apartments. They were
out, when on ſtepping back to
to her couſin, ſhe obſerved a poor
n, who by her geſtures, endeavour-
nake herſelf underſtood. Malvina
perfectly ignorant of the dialect;
bſerved the expreſſion of her count-
e, which pourtrayed goodneſs and
, while her ſoft voice, and the gen-
of her look, made each perſon feel
aged, when ſhe was near them,
e ſhe appeared willing to liſten to
ſorrows; for the language of the
has but little occaſion for words,
comprehended, when it is written
index of the countenance. Mrs.
quickly came up to her, and ob-
Malvina give ſome money to the
oman, who thanked her for the
manner with which ſhe preſented
nitely more than the gift itſelf,
ith viſible diſpleaſure, couſin, all
fortunate perſons whom I receive

here, are perfectly well taken care of, a
have no occasion to receive alms from
stranger. Besides, if we give to one
two, all will expect it: and it is impossi
by chance, to select the most deservi
I should not have supposed, madam,
plied Malvina, there was any necessity
reflecting on so simple an action. T
poor creature appeared to suffer mo
than the others, she seemed endeavouri
to make me understand her afflictio
and I wished to soften them if possible.

But do you know, replied Mrs. Burt
with some haughtiness, that this is the f
time any stranger whom I have condu
ed here, thought it proper to follow th
inclinations in that point, or to swer
from the rules I have established, withc
first obtaining my permission. I shou
have supposed madam, said Malvina, t
I was only following your example, a
therefore did not wait for the permissi
to perform a good action. During t
dialog

dialogue, the poor woman underſtood that Mrs. Burton was diſpleaſed with her couſin, for having given her money; and offered to return it; when Malvina, with quickneſs replied, no, I will never take it again, and ſhould have hoped, that in an aſylum, dedicated to benevolence, I ſhould not for the firſt time in my life have been forbidden to aſſiſt the unfortunate. Mrs. B. felt the force of this reproof, and without anſwering her couſin, ſhe drew her purſe, and gave the poor woman double the ſum ſhe had received from Malvina. But the gifts of vanity, as well as thoſe of virtue, have each their price; and the poor woman would have relinquiſhed what Mrs. Burton had given her, for one ſimple mark of compaſſion from Malvina.

During the remainder of this viſit, Malvina was ſenſibly hurt by the air of conſtraint ſhe obſerved on every countenance. On *entering the ſchool*, ſhe left

Mrs. Burton to converſe with the maſter; and went into the garden, where ſhe obſerved ſeveral little girls ſeated in a circle. The eldeſt ſtood up in the center of her companions, and was ſinging them a ſong. Malvina approached this little group, making a ſign for them to continue their amuſement. They at firſt appeared intimidated, but her looks ſoon encouraged them, and the little ſongſtreſs even ventured to take her hand, requeſting her to be ſeated.

Malvina conſented, and taking the child on her knee, ſhe enquired how ſhe came to ſpeak ſuch good Engliſh, while her companions were ſcarcely to be underſtood? It is my Godfather who teaches me, madam, when he is here, and when he is not, he pays my maſter for ſpeaking to me ſometimes. And who is your Godfather, my dear? Sir Edmond Burton, madam, it is he who has given us *ſuch nice* ſunday clothes: he never

comes

comes here without bringing me ſome-thing. But if he beſtows every thing on you, does it not make your companions jealous? Oh no, madam, he never for-gets any of us. He gave that handker-chief to Peggy, which ſhe has on, that petticoat to Molly, thoſe ſciſſars to Suky; it is he who buys us all our nice things. If your Godfather is ſo good, you ought to love him very much? And ſo I do madam, dearly, I am only happy when I ſee him, he takes me on his lap as you do madam, every body is ſo happy when he is here.

They have reaſon, added Mr. Prior, who had juſt placed himſelf behind Mal-vina. Sir Edmond has very great vices; but he is truly benevolent, and were it not for the gifts, which he ſo kindly beſtows here, theſe poor eſtabliſhments would want for almoſt every thing.

I have been waiting for you this hour,

ſaid Mrs. Burton, joining her couſin. At the ſight of her, the children immediately diſappeared, with the ſwiftneſs of a flight of birds; except the little girl whom Malvina retained: and who ſeemed to experience leſs fear on the ſight of Mrs. B. from being near Malvina. Who ſurpriſed at her confidence, rudely diſengaged her from Malvina, ſaying, that her maſter wanted her. The little girl, taking Malvina's hand, kiſſed it with fervour; and flew to join her companions. Frances, who had been much delighted with her, ran to prevent her going, and the little girl, as if dubious whether to return, ſtopped. When Mrs. B. who could no longer conceal her impatience, ſaid to Malvina; couſin, deſire Miſs Sheridan to return, and be adviſed in future not to permit her to ſet ſuch an example, as it will prevent the children from performing their duty.

When it interferes with the intereſt of others,

others, Malvina could repreſs injuſtice by a pertinent and ſevere reply; but when ſhe only regarded herſelf, the uncommon goodneſs of her heart, prevented her anſwering in that manner; and ſhe only ſaid to Mrs. Burton, do not be fearful, madam, of my giving a bad example to Frances; I think on the contrary, that by encouraging her to join in the innocent recreations of theſe children, I ſhall teach her on ſome future day, to excite them by her example, to prefer ſtudy to play.

From the ſchool, they went to the forge, and Mrs. Burton there alſo found reaſon to blame Malvina, as ſhe examined every thing with attention, and aſſiſted by Mr. Prior, queſtioned all the workmen; and ſhewed ſhe was intereſted in all ſhe ſaw. Her peculiar beauty, and the dignity of her manners, lent a faſcinating charm to the gentleneſs of her queſtions. She enquired the name of each, informed herſelf of the number of their children,

and their means of providing for them. In the midſt of this burning furnace, ſurrounded by the poor workmen, covered with tatters, ſcorched and blackened by the ſmoke and fire, ſhe appeared in their eyes, like an angel from Heaven. They all ſurrounded her, ſurpriſed and delighted at her condeſcenſion, in liſtening to their family details. For though the inhabitants of wild mountains, they were not the leſs ſenſible of the pleaſure of being noticed with kindneſs: and Malvina by ſhewing ſhe was intereſted in their concerns, raiſed them to their proper ſphere, as fellow-beings, and gave them a ſenſation of happineſs, which all the gold Mrs. Burton poſſeſſed, could not afford.

It is thus, thought Mr. Prior, ſelf-love may beſtow a benefit, but virtue only knows, in what manner to confer them; with that undefinable ſweetneſs, which only flows from the heart of real benevolence.

luca. Self-love acts only by the aid of fortune, but virtue will derive all resources from itself. The one may benefit by gifts; but the other cherishes and administers more happiness, from feeling and sympathy. Thus, while the donations of one demand a gratitude, which is felt as the heaviest and most galling chain, those of virtue receive it from others, as the spontaneous gift of the heart. As Mr. Prior reflected in this manner, he contemplated Malvina with the most respectful sensations—and as her head was turned from him, he melted into tears.

Nothing could escape the watchful jealousy of Mrs. Burton, who imagined she was less esteemed, from the powerful effect Malvina had on every one, and though she was not near her, she perceived this action of Mr. Prior's, and this was sufficient to render her hateful. Come, come, my fair cousin, said she,

with an ironical ſmile, it is time we ſh
be gone, the hours of theſe workmen
not their own, and while we treſpaſs
them, they are loſers; during the
we are converſing with them, and amu
ourſelves, they are obliged to ſuſp
their work; and all theſe idle and uſe
queſtions, will not aſſiſt them to
She immediately quitted the place, w
out waiting for a reply. Malvina foll
ed. but as her couſin walked uncomm
ly faſt, it was ſome time before ſhe re
ed her. Mr. Prior being near her, ſai
a whiſper, does Madame de Sorcy
think me guilty, does ſhe not ſuſpect.
I might have been capable of judgi
Malvina looked at him in ſilence.
Prior required no other anſwer, and
nored that reſpectful indulgence, wh
yet doubted, and that delicacy wh
feared to cenſure.

During dinner, Mrs. Burton threw
ſeveral ſarcaſms, againſt thoſe who
affun

aſſumed the veil of gentleneſs, in order to render themſelves intereſting, and by an affectation of miſplaced goodneſs, ſucceeded in gaining admiration. Malvina, conſcious of not meriting ſuch reproaches, had not an idea of applying them to herſelf.

But Mr. Prior, who underſtood her intention, could not reſiſt replying with quickneſs.—There are ſorrows, madam, which are ſo unaffected, and goodneſs which is ſo intereſting, that every one muſt perceive it; and if you attentively examine the world, you will find that ſuch emotions ſo natural to the heart of man, are never ſuppoſed erroneous, but by thoſe alone, who are capable of feigning them. Mrs. Burton was petrified by this reply, it was the firſt time Mr. Prior had anſwered her in this manner: the effect this produced, will not be ſeen here, but in the developement of her character, it will be imagined. Malvina ſurpriſed at

Mr.

Mr. Prior's converſation, without the idea of the ſecret motives which ind it; ſaid with a ſerious voice, it ap to me, Mr. Prior, that this moment o others, was the leaſt calculated to eſta this opinion; and when ſo many amples have confirmed, one alone is ficient to deſtroy it. On conclu theſe words, ſhe looked at her couſin find if poſſible, to whom ſhe allu with an expreſſion of tenderneſs, as i wiſhed to ſooth her, for the inju of which Mr. Prior had been guilty. he, though afflicted at the opinion ſhe tertained of him; continued to thin her in the moſt exalted light. Mrs. J ton felt that it was more impoſſible to don the reply of Malvina—than tha Mr. Prior. The one had offended but the other ſhe conſidered as humilia her in telling ſo ſevere a truth. Mr. P had ſatisfied his revenge, in vindica Malvina; but ſhe had forced her to bl When goodneſs has not the power

fect, it irritates. Hatred is augmented by the good it endeavours to use for us, and, of all the sufferings of self-love, the most corroding that it can experience, is, that it never forgives. When compelled to be grateful, by the person with whom it feels this constraint, it is a secret acknowledgment of its inferiority. A long silence ensued after Malvina's reply.—By prolonging it, each person felt more embarrassed, and appeared fearful of interrupting it.

Miss Melmor had scarcely heard what had been said, and her mother endeavoured in vain, to guess from the eyes of Mrs. Burton, what she should attempt to alleviate her anger; though she was conscious she was not the object of her displeasure, she nevertheless felt intimidated, and was fearful of addressing her, though she wished to turn her thoughts from the cause of her chagrin. At that instant the bell rung at the gate, Mrs. Burton listened,

ed with uneaſineſs, and ſoon heard the noiſe of horſes and a carriage. It is certainly Sir Edmond, exclaimed Miſs Melmor, bluſhing, and riſing to go to the window.. And ſuppoſe it is, ſaid Mrs. B. with ſeverity, is it proper for you to go and meet him? Keep your ſeat, child, ſaid Mrs. Melmor, delighted at having ſaid what ſhe thought would pleaſe Mrs. B. A ſervant entered, and announced Sir Edmond's arrival. Dinner being concluded, Malvina aroſe, and requeſted permiſſion to retire; which Mrs. B. granted in ſo gracious a manner, that from the preceding converſation, Malvina was ſurpriſed at the look of complaiſance which accompanied her conſent.

CHAP. VII.

AN EXPLANATION.

TOWARDS evening, Malvina was preparing to go down, when Mrs. B. entered her apartment. My dear couſin, ſaid ſhe, in a voice of kindneſs, the eagerneſs which you evinced to leave us, on the arrival of Sir Edmond, convinces me of the repugnance which you have to worldly company. Do not imagine that I blame you; no, on the contrary, it appears to me ſo natural in your ſituation, that I will do every thing in my power to indulge you in it; conſequently you are perfectly at liberty

liberty to remain alone all the time Sir Edmond continues here, and I have already given orders that you may be attended in your own apartment. You are very good, madam, replied Malvina, a little ſurpriſed, but I had much rather go down, than encreaſe the trouble which this will occaſion. No, no, my dear, you know that it is one of my firſt pleaſures to gratify the taſtes of all my friends, and I had rather deprive myſelf the pleaſure of your ſociety, during the ſhort ſtay of Sir Edmond, than conſtrain your liberty. Thus then the affair is ſettled. No compliments, added ſhe, interrupting Malvina, (who was attempting to ſpeak) I am perfectly convinced of its being agreeable to you, and not any thing in the world ſhall prevent me from ſacrificing my wiſhes or pleaſure to the gratification of my friends. Saying this, ſhe departed, without waiting for Malvina's reply, who could not help thinking her couſin's behaviour rather ſingular. But as the propoſal

poſal was really agreeable to her, ſhe acquieſced with pleaſure, and never troubled herſelf to inveſtigate the cauſe.

Conſequently ſhe arranged every thing, that ſhe might not leave her retreat, and ſpent all her time, between her little charge, and her books. She enjoyed with one, a ſatisfaction which gratified her heart; from the other, nouriſhment for her mind: and in this ſecluſion, ſhe experienced the ſweeteſt moments ſhe had taſted ſince her arrival at the caſtle.

Two days had elapſed with rapidity; on the third, in the evening, ſhe heard a gentle rap at her door, which Tomkins having opened, Mr. Prior appeared, he approached Malvina with apparent embarraſsment. Will Madame de Sorcy pardon me, for thus intruding on her ſolitude? as you manifeſted a deſire of taking ſome leſſons in the Erſe language, I imagined, it perhaps might be more agreeable

greeable when you are thus secluded. I h
brought a clear and concise abridgn
of the different grammars, which I h
digested, in order to lessen the troubl
the first difficulties. If you will allow
the pleasure of attending you every da
shall esteem myself happy in affording
all the instruction in my power? On
conclusion of this request, he hesita
as if he had expressed a desire, wh
might not meet her approbation.

Malvina, truly grateful for the p
he had taken, replied (with vivacit
am sensible of your kindness, Mr. P
and I anticipate, much pleasure i
the instruction you promise me, prov
Mrs. Burton is not offended at our
waiting for her attendance. Mrs. B.
dam, in a moment of caprice, imag
she had a desire to learn, but I who k
her so well, can assure you, that if
only begin when she does, you will
ver get farther than the first lesso

hope, returned Malvina, for my couſin's ſake, the aſſurance you give me of knowing her ſo well, is a little exaggerated? But I will relinquiſh this ſubject, for I have had many reaſons to ſee on this point, we ſhall never agree, or underſtand each other.

Pardon me, madam, replied Mr. Prior, ſeating himſelf near her; but your eſteem is ſo neceſſary to me, that it is impoſſible not to defend myſelf againſt the accuſation you retain of me in your heart: and Mrs. Burton is too great a ſtranger to you for me to imagine, I ſhall wound you in deſcribing her as ſhe really is. Stop, Mr. Prior, interrupted Malvina, when it is to abuſe the confidence, to unveil the errors of thoſe we ſee every day, and may I not add, a want of delicacy, when it regards thoſe we live with? I grant it would be ſo, he anſwered, Ah! if I had not been chained here, can you ſuppoſe, that from the moment I had known Mrs. B. I would have continued

in

in this place a day longer? But who has forged chains for you here? asked Malvina with eagerness. I will inform you, madam. I have been anxious to communicate all my thoughts to you, which I hope you will impute to the real motive, which is, that your physiognomy arrests my confidence, and the interest you have created in me, has been so lively and peculiar, that I hope you will not determine to refuse to hear me.

He pronounced these words with so much emotion, that they awakened a tender recollection in the soul of Malvina; she thought she once again heard the voice of friendship, she felt the full force of this sweet remembrance: and it occasioned her tears to fall in profusion. Mr. Prior, replied Malvina, in an affecting tone, it is exactly thus that Lady Sheridan would have expressed herself. Ah! is it possible, cried he, what, can I recall her to your imagination; ah, if I could gain the

felicity

felicity of inſpiring in your mind, only the ſmalleſt portion of the intereſt ſhe created, then would the hand of friendſhip endeavour to mitigate the poignancy of your ſorrow; and if thoſe eyes, which are ſo often raiſed to Heaven, could ſometimes bend their looks towards the Earth, and condeſcend to mingle their tears with mine, for the friend of your youth.—Ah! what an unexpected bleſſing would this beſtow on my exiſtence. Perhaps you might alſo find a trifling benefit from this participation, for the confidence is ſoothing at all times: and that of a friend, will ſometimes ſupply the place of a brother. That place which Clara poſſeſſed in my heart, can never be filled, replied Malvina; but believe me, 'till now you are the only being with whom I could weep: this preference I cannot account for, as I know ſo little of you. And that little, appears to merit ſo ſmall a ſhare of your eſteem, interrupted he, ſmiling;—but perhaps you may form a

different

different opinion when I resume the d
course, which the agitation of my he
obliged me to suspend.

It is now three years since I arriv
here, prepossessed in favor of Mrs. B
ton I thought her exactly what she a
pears to you; that is good, generous, a
much superior to her sex in virtue, a
elevation of mind: and I had flatte
myself with the pleasing prospect, whi
residing near her afforded. The sumpt
ous elegance of this retreat, first occasi
ed my opinion to falter, but did not e
tirely destroy the enthusiasm I entertain
of her character. At this juncture, one
my brothers, whose affairs were very mu
deranged, was arrested for debt; my
ther and mother would have parted w
most of their property to extricate hi
but that not being sufficient, I address
myself to Mrs. B. and informed her of
situation; and she consented to advan
three years of my salary: delighted w

1

nerosity, I joyfully signed the agree-
of remaining three years with her,
ever imagined I should have reason
ent it, but I was soon undeceived.
on as she was assured I could not
her, from that moment her beha-
was totally altered: I no longer
ienced that gracious affability which
on my respect: in its stead, she as-
l a capricious despotism. I could
oop to this galling yoke; and there-
the first opportunity, I desired her
ission to leave the castle, giving her
mise of payment for what she had
iced, and all I could save from my
r:—both which she rejected with
itiness, shewing me the paper,
ontents of which she had dictated,
i the effusion of my gratitude, I had
l without reading. I now found by
hat she had a right to detain me, and
should forfeit my honor and good
, if I left this castle without her
nt. I therefore reluctantly resigned

 myself

myſelf to my deſtiny; but from that m
ment my eyes were opened, and I f
Mrs. Burton's real character. As I f
the happineſs of liberating my broth
I endeavoured to be content; and I
clare to you, in the name of that frie
ſhip, which united you to Lady Sherid
that you are the only perſon who
even ſuſpected the judgment I had form
of her, and I certainly eſtimate the bl
ſing granted me for my prudence, a
the tedious pains I have endured, that
have at laſt found a heart which can ſy
pathiſe with mine.

Your deſtiny affects and intereſts n
ſir, replied Malvina, and I acknowled
my couſin has given you reaſon to co
plain of her. How can you explain
want of generoſity with reſpect to yc
when it is contraſted by that benevol
profuſion, of which ſhe is ſo prodigal
all who ſurround her?—The good whi
ſhe performs is infinitely leſs than it
pea

pears; the eſtabliſhments which you have ſeen are in want of every thing.—She knows it, and will not relieve them: provided it is known and ſaid, that ſhe ſupports and comforts the unhappy, it is of little conſequence to her whether it is ſo in reality.

But, interrupted Malvina with quickneſs, if benevolence did not inſtigate her, what motive could ſhe have for fixing her reſidence in theſe rude mountains?—Self-love I fear has been the only motive and ſole mover of that action. She hoped, that by forming aſylums of benevolence, near a fairy palace, in the barren mountains of the Highlands, her name would be celebrated. It was the deſign of an enlightened ſelfiſhneſs that occaſioned her to erect hoſpitals, though they are in want of neceſſaries. It was this which ornamented theſe apartments with ſuch profuſion; it is thus that the oſtentatious monuments of ſelf-love always re-

tain their peculiar impreſſion, and the more they endeavour to reſemble virtue, the more they are convinced, that it is impoſſible to equal the lovely original.

Gracious Heaven, exclaimed Malvina, how very ſevere you are in your obſervations! Add alſo, ſaid Mr. Prior, that they are juſt, madam, and allow that your own inſtinct is the occaſion of your feeling an intereſt in the character of Mrs. Burton? I do not deny that my partiality for her is not equal to the eſteem I think ſhe deſerves; but you muſt acknowledge, ſir, that notwithſtanding the vanity with which you have accuſed her, in other reſpects, it is impoſſible for any one to have leſs, on account of her perſon: for to liſten to her you would imagine that ſhe was much older, and leſs handſome than ſhe appears.

When we cannot any longer hope to receive praiſes on the part of beauty, we endeavour

endeavour to obtain it, by feigning ourſelves above it, replied Mr. Prior; but reſt aſſured, this uncommon humility is only exhibited, in order to be contradicted: we are ſeldom the dupes of thoſe who depreciate themſelves more than uſual; and candour is the laſt qualification we ſhould believe ſhe poſſeſſed. I have obſerved, and am certain, that when the habit of adulation is once excited, that we had rather find fault, than allow ſelf to be forgotten. Thus you obſerve, ſhe has tranſported all the vices of ſociety into this retreat, and though we may call it living alone, ſhe ſtill lives in the world. For does not ambition govern her even here; is ſhe not agitated and diſtreſſed for fear the union between Sir Edmond and Lady Summerhill ſhould not take place? and her hatred towards Miſs Melmor, becauſe this young man has paid her a great deal of attention? In ſhort, may we not apply this paſſage in ſcripture

to her; *that riches have been her inheritance, but ſhe has forgot the hand which beſtowed them, and has ſacrificed only to the world: it is for this reaſon, that when occupied by mirth and gaiety, her heart is gloomy, and all her joys end in ſatiety and ennui.

Mr. Prior, replied Malvina (ſmiling) the ſcripture which you quote, alſo deſires us to acquire that charity which thinks no evil, which diſpoſes the mind to indulgence, without degenerating into credulity: and if we obſerve an error, not to conſider it as a crime. Mr. Prior bluſhed, and Malvina convinced him, that one of the firſt precepts of his ſtation, was to ſpare his neighbours, as in that caſe he was more guilty than any other, of judging without lenity. But the impreſſion was received, and the injuſtice of which he had been the victim, had ſoured his temper, and given a rigid ſeverity to his

* Firſt of Proverbs.

his diſpoſition, which he could not now correct. While they were diſcuſſing this point, the ſupper bell rung, and they were aſtoniſhed to find with what rapidity time had winged his flight, while they were converſing.

Mr. Prior had never known moments of felicity equal to theſe enjoyed in her ſociety ſince his exiſtence, and begged permiſſion to viſit her the next day, that they might renew the converſation, or begin the firſt leſſon. Malvina, who had felt when with him a confidence, which had ſome affinity to that ſhe experienced for Lady Sheridan, conſented with pleaſure.

The following days, Mr. Prior was admitted, and paſſed ſome hours with her, which appeared to him only as moments which vaniſhed with the rapidity of lightning. In contemplating and hoping to poſſeſs the friendſhip of Malvina, and

converſing on that ſubject, he felt a happineſs he never experienced even an idea of, as it appeared to him as a foretaſte of and reſembled thoſe celeſtial joys, which are reſerved for the virtuous in an immortal ſtate. As to Malvina, it is not to be wondered at, if ſhe was perfectly ignorant of the conſequences which might reſult from ſuch an intimacy. For it is age leſs than character, which gives this experience, and ſuch a character may at the age of twenty-five know leſs than any other at eighteen. A woman endowed with a tender heart and a lively and pure imagination may live long in the world without knowing this. For it exiſts entirely in the difference of character, and that inſtinctive difference which prompts each to judge of others by themſelves, and it is this which forces them from error to error, drives them from misfortune to misfortune, and makes them live half their lives in a world of chimeras, of their own forming, without perceiving them.

It

It is difficult to be convinced, and very painful when forced to be ſo! What then muſt it be with ſuch a character as Malvina's, who had paſſed her youth with a being ſimilar to herſelf, both poſſeſſing the ſame ſentiments. This union of their hearts, when confirmed by the judgment of the mind, ſo entirely abſorbed them, and they were ſo happy in their affection for each other, that they lived in the world without obſerving thoſe around them, or troubling themſelves to inveſtigate their actions.

Who could be aſtoniſhed at their inexperience, without feeling a ſenſation of pity, on beholding them the dupes of their own hearts? Malvina, in the innocence of hers, had not an idea that there was reaſon to blame the viſits of Mr. Prior. Being a ſtranger to love, ſhe had not a thought that ſhe could inſpire ſuch a ſentiment; beſides, his being a prieſt, and a Roman Catholic, like her-

ſelf, would have been ſufficient to
niſh any doubts of that kind, had it b
in her nature to conceive them.

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CHAP. VIII.

AN INTERVIEW.

EIGHT days had elapſed with unuſual ſwiftneſs, ſince Malvina had remained in her own apartment, during which time, ſhe had never once ſeen Mrs. Burton. She was fearful ſhe might give offence, if ſhe any longer ſecluded herſelf, and determined to make her a viſit before breakfaſt.—She went to her chamber, and knocking at her door, the maid informed her that Mrs. Burton was then dreſſing, but would ſee her in half an hour. Malvina requeſted they would ac-

quaint her when Mrs. B. was to be viſible, and on her return, ſhe paſſed through the muſic-room, and ſeeing ſome French ſongs lying near a harp, ſhe ſtopped to look at them.—The contemplation of theſe ſongs in her native language—that language, in which ſhe had expreſſed her firſt ſentiments, had ſo powerful an attraction over her, that ſhe could not reſiſt the impulſe of reading them; and that ſhe might underſtand them better, ſhe ſeated herſelf before the harp, and accompanied it with her voice: ſuddenly ſhe heard the ſoft notes of a German flute, which attended her.—Aſtoniſhed, ſhe turned her head, and perceived behind her chair, a young man whom ſhe had never ſeen. She bluſhed, and would have retired, but he intreated ſhe would not deprive him of the pleaſure of hearing her ſing. She raiſed her eyes to him who thus intreated, and caſt them down immediately, bluſhing a deeper ſhade. It was one of thoſe countenances where the

the fire of wit was tempered, and united with ſenſibility, and which could not be looked at twice with impunity.

The innocent Malvina was unconſcious of the danger; and the cauſe which ſhould have tempted her to retire, was the very reaſon which prompted her to ſtay. But, if the looks of Sir Edmond had ſo agreeably ſurpriſed her, how ſhall I deſcribe what he felt on beholding her? He had heard Malvina at a diſtance, he drew near, liſtened to that voice which vibrated through his heart, and firſt taught him that ſhe had one. She turned, and the charm was fixed. Her beautiful light brown hair, flowing in ſoft ringlets over her ſhoulders; her pure white ſkin, reſembled the white roſe, blended with a ſlight tinge of the carnation bloom of youth, but ſo faintly, that it left the eye uncertain of the real colour; her lovely white neck appeared more white, when contraſted by her dark robes; her mild

dark

dark eyes were ſhaded with long ſilken laſhes, which veiled thoſe chaſte and expreſſive looks, which ever intereſted the heart. Her timid modeſty, aſtoniſhed and enchanted him.—A new world appeared to open to him, and he indulged, without reſerve, the delightful idea it occaſioned, provided Malvina would enjoy it with him.

Theſe moments ſo enchanting, were too confuſed to be analyſed: an impreſſion of this kind produces ſenſations ſo extremely faſcinating, that by an inviſible inſtinct we are fearful of imbibing any thing which can alter or deſtroy them, and we wiſh to remain inconſcious of its exiſtence, that its duration may be laſting.—From its birth, the other powers of the ſoul retire, as if from reſpect, fearful of intruding on the ſovereign who unites with, yet reigns over them all. Malvina was near her chair, but appeared undetermined whether to reſeat herſelf, when,

at

at inſtant Mrs. Burton entered the

e betrayed much ſurpriſe on perceiv-
Sir Edmond. Then addreſſing Mal-
in an ironical manner; ſhe ſaid, I
ied, my dear couſin, to prevent you
kſomeneſs of waiting for me; but I
: with pleaſure, that you have found
is to prevent it. On hearing this,
a acquainted Mrs. Burton with all
particulars of this chance meeting—
t was all chance, retorted Mrs. Bur-
with quickneſs! Yes, undoubtedly
, cried Sir Edmond, and I never
ght it ſo peculiarly ſo, as at this

You are perhaps the only one
added Mrs. Burton, with viſible ill-
our. Malvina gueſſed, and felt her
ing, and wounded by the ſuſpicion,
etiring, without being prevented by
ouſin. When Sir Edmond, alarmed
r intention, approached her, ſaying,
eagerneſs; what, madam, are we go-

ing

ing to loſe you, and have you only appeared for a moment, that we may ſuffer from the loſs your abſence will occaſion? Why do you keep thus cruelly ſecluded and inviſible—do you fear, that in affording us that ſatisfaction, you may be too much adored?

Mrs. Burton coloured with vexation: Malvina bluſhed alſo, but not from the ſame motive; a ſentiment ſweet, but unknown to her, baniſhed for a moment the gloomy ſhades of ſorrow which had enveloped her, and perhaps, ſhe would have yielded to the perſuaſions of Sir Edmond, had ſhe not thought it moſt adviſable to decline them, particularly as ſhe perceived it was not agreeable to Mrs. Burton, who continued ſilent. She therefore withdrew.

Mr. Prior went to viſit her early in the afternoon. Do you know, madam, ſaid he, ſmiling, that your rencontre this morning

g has had a very powerful effect
Edmond, for he could not ſpeak
ther ſubject but yourſelf during
. Really, replied ſhe, bluſhing.
tainly true; but why ſhould it
you?—Whoever ſees you but for
nt, muſt feel themſelves intereſted
at concerns you. But Mr. Prior,
lvina, with an air of timidity, how
poſſibly be the ſubject of conver-
what could be ſaid of me, who am
t to every one? I am very glad
ve this ſlight emotion of curioſity,
ming friend, it gives me a hope,
fatal grief, which threw the veil
ference over every object, begins
raw a little. Theſe words cre-
eeper bluſh on the cheek of Mal-
t, had any one enquired the cauſe
he would have been at a loſs to
xplained its origin; for ſhe was
ious that any motive, except cu-
had dictated the queſtion. That

a ſecret intimation had occaſioned her to bluſh, ſhe felt as a truth.

Know then, that Sir Edmond aſked a thouſand queſtions concerning you, continued Mr. Prior, he wiſhed to know what motive had conducted you here, and why ſecluded in your apartment, you appeared to ſhun all the world. Mrs. Burton replied, that many and continued ſorrows, had undermined the health of Madame de Sorcy, increaſed her natural timidity, and rendered the world diſagreeable to her; and for this reaſon, ſhe fears and ſhuns it. I am aſtoniſhed, exclaimed Sir Edmond, that ſhe ſhould fear to embelliſh it; there is not any circle which Madame de Sorcy would not ornament! As to myſelf, I acknowledge I never beheld any one who could be compared with her. Malvina appeared agitated, which Mr. Prior attributed to ſurpriſe; you are aſtoniſhed I perceive, at the freedom of Sir Edmond, to a woman as vain as Mrs. Burton;

Burton; but I muſt do him the juſtice to allow, that notwithſtanding the inconſtancy of, flightineſs of his goſſemer taſte, his love of pleaſure, and all the faults with which he is reproached, yet he has ever preſerved his ſincerity; and even to Mrs. Burton, whoſe character he is perfectly acquainted with, and on whom part of his fortune depends, he never condescends to diſguiſe the truth. It is an eulogium on them both, replied Malvina, for it is perhaps, as rare to know and hear it, as to dare to aſſert it. But he is the only one here who poſſeſſes that privilege. It is perhaps the fault of others, interrupted Malvina, that ſometimes we are unjuſt; and when we accuſe thoſe of a fault, to whom we are ſo, we muſt not be aſtoniſhed if we are repulſed with ill humour. No, replied Mr. Prior, be aſſured Mrs. Burton will not permit ſuch liberties from any one, as ſhe does from Sir Edmond, but ſhe acquieſces, becauſe he is the ſole object of her ambition; and its accompliſhment depends entirely on him. You

perhaps

perhaps know that ſhe has promiſed to leave him all her fortune, on condition, that he will marry Lady Mary Summerhill, not that ſhe has the leaſt idea that it may contribute to augment his happineſs; no, ſhe does not regard ſo trifling a concern.

But the family of Summerhill is one of the moſt ancient in Scotland, and likewiſe poſſeſſes the moſt intereſt, and is the moſt favored at St. James's. Lord Stafford is the friend ſo Sir Edmond, and has promiſed, if the marriage takes place, that he will procure a ſeat in parliament for him; and will alſo uſe his intereſt to procure a peerage for Mrs. Burton.

Theſe, madam, are the motives which have determined this affair; yet, Sir Edmond appears to comply with great reluctance, though he enjoys but a limited fortune; and very juſtly prefers his independence to riches and dignities. Without

out abſolutely rejecting the alliance, he poſtpones it from time to time. The fear that he may relinquiſh it entirely, by which means ſhe will loſe the title, which has been ſo long the principal object of her deſire, forces Mrs. Burton to coincide with, and attend to all he ſays. This circumſtance gives him great power over her, and while he continues here, he performs many excellent actions—particularly compelling his aunt to beſtow thoſe gifts on the poor eſtabliſhments, which ſhe would otherwiſe ſpend on herſelf. I ſhould ſuppoſe, Mr. Prior, that a character, who makes ſo excellent an advantage of his power, ought to be both noble and generous; and I cannot comprehend how ſo many eſtimable qualities can be united with the vices which you attribute to him?

Sir Edmond, returned Mr. Prior, had the misfortune, madam, to be his own maſter too early in life.—Thrown on the world without a guide, he never once endeavoured

endeavoured to reſtrain his firſt diſſolu
inclinations, and they became the foun
of his future corruption. His ſoul
certainly great and noble; I have r
marked in more than one occaſion, th
he has carried his love of benevolence t
an enthuſiaſtic degree. His word is ſacre
and inviolable; courageous to temerit
his honor is dearer to him than lif
and no power on earth could force hi
to forfeit his. He is alſo ſo diſintereſte
that he would have ſacrificed his fma
fortune for the ſatisfaction of enablir
his ſiſter to contract a marriage whi
would have rendered her happy, and
ſatisfy the ſcruples of the parties wh
objected to the marriage on that accoun

Well, Mr. Prior, ſaid Malvina, app
rently delighted with the deſcription
this character;—Well, madam, and to co
traſt ſo many virtues, I muſt inform yo
there reſides in him ſuch an inordina
paſſion for women, joined to ſuch depr

wity of principles, that though he is juſt and true to all the world, he ſeduces and deceives them without remorſe. It is not alone an irreſiſtible inclination which forces him to act in this manner; but it is both art and deſign which he employs—ſex is the only attraction. Not the ſelection of the heart; he is a ſtranger to every thing but intrigue, which commenced accidentally, pleaſure completed, and diſguſt deſtroyed! Love —real and refined love, will ever be a ſtranger to him, its pure and genuine flame can never be felt, or ariſe in a heart prophaned by debauchery.

During the concluſion of this diſcourſe, Malvina had fallen into a deep reverie, ſhe appeared not to hear Mr. Prior, who, following her example, became abſent and thoughtful; when Tomkins haſtily opened the door, and enquired if Miſs Sheridan was there? I thought ſhe had been with you, replied Malvina, with quickneſs,

quickneſs, and alarmed. I have not ſeen her ſince dinner, and I have ſearched in vain for her, as ſhe is not with Mrs. Burton. Ah, my God, ſaid Malvina, ruſhing out of the room, and flying from one apartment to another, without finding her. Mr. Prior, who was extremely diſtreſſed on the occaſion, ſearched the grounds for her. Malvina continuing under the greateſt anxiety, repeatedly called on little Frances, as loud as poſſible; ſhe heard at laſt a voice anſwer, which ſhe recogniſed was her darling's. She opened ſeveral doors, and in the laſt room, which ſhe had not obſerved before, ſhe beheld Sir Edmond, with Frances ſeated on his knee. The pleaſure of finding her and the anxiety ſhe had experienced united, created ſuch ſenſations, that her ſtrength was nearly exhauſted; when pale and trembling, ſhe ſunk into the firſt chair which was near the door, and held out her arms to the child, who flew into them,

them, and Malvina preſſing her to her boſom, tenderly careſſed her.

Sir Edmond approached her with aſtoniſhment; ſaying, am I ſo unfortunate as to have been the cauſe of the uneaſineſs you have experienced—permit me to requeſt your pardon for this involuntary offence? I have found her, replied Malvina, ſhewing Frances, and I am too happy to complain of any one. Sir Edmond contemplated her in ſilence, his eyes ſuffuſed with tears. This is nature, added he, with vivacity, and it is only in the character where nature and ſimplicity reſides, we can prove its effect: to day, he continued, you have taught me, how much ſhe ſurpaſſes the unnatural beings who I thought poſſeſſed her traits! There is no good without truth.—And that truth will bring conviction, replied Malvina; if you go beyond it, we may be led aſtray. Certainly, replied he, others have ſaid that before you; but no one

has ever ſaid it like you. The ſurpriſe you have created, can only be equalled by the pleaſure of ſeeing you. But, ah! I hope I have not offended you, madam, added he, on Malvina's riſing to retire, as you are going to puniſh me for being too ſincere?

I am too little accuſtomed to the world to underſtand ſuch language, and I ſhould have been equally pleaſed, had I been exempted from receiving theſe marks of your diſtinction. As ſhe was going out, Sir Edmond followed her with an agitated air, ſaying, really do you think it poſſible to converſe with you, with ſuch a diſpoſition as mine, and not be loſt? This confeſſion reminded Malvina of what ſhe had heard from Mr. Prior, and ſhe ſmiled involuntarily; Sir Edmond marked it, adding, I reſpect your ſilence too much, to dare to queſtion the cauſe of that ſmile, but I imagine ſome one has given you an *odious* opinion of me? You may reſt

aſſured,

aſſured, returned Malvina, if they have ſaid any evil, they have not concealed any of your good qualities, which far exceeds the bad.

Sir Edmond, who was near her, took her hand, ſaying, perhaps you wiſhed to believe the one more than the other? Quite the contrary, ſaid Malvina, for when I am ſpeaking of a ſtranger, I aſſure you I am ever inclined to dwell on the good, and believe it, in preference to the bad. Certainly I am a ſtranger to you, replied Sir Edmond, ſmiling, as ſhe opened the door, when ſhe perceived another door that led to the gallery was alſo open, which a woman appeared to cloſe, as ſhe uttered a ſhriek. The voice Malvina thought was Miſs Melmor's, but ſhe immediately rejected this idea, on perceiving her enter the room at this inſtant. Sir Edmond pretended that he had not heard or obſerved any perſon, and re-

ſpectfully bowed to Malvina as ſhe departed.

She went down to Mrs. Burton, where ſhe found Mr. Prior, and related to them, her finding her little darling with Sir Edmond. The latter ſoon joined them—Malvina felt no inclination to retire, and Mrs. Burton did not think it adviſeable to admoniſh her, though her uneaſineſs was not the leaſt diminiſhed on ſeeing her nephew near ſo charming a woman. For, ever ſince Malvina's arrival, ſhe had ſeverely repented having received her. It was not the inclination which he poſſeſſed for women in general, of which ſhe was fearful; ſhe was conſcious alſo, that Malvina was endowed with ſomething infinitely ſuperior to that which can attract the ſenſes only: and conſequently, made her tremble for the projected union with Lady Summerhill. Notwithſtanding this painful idea, ſhe felt it was both neceſſary and polite in her, not to hurt the independent

dent ſpirit of this haughty young man, by letting him perceive, that ſhe wiſhed Malvina to be kept ſecluded. She was perfectly ſenſible that ſuch a proceeding would be the greateſt inducement for him to wiſh to counteract it, as he would never ſubmit to the will of others.

The moſt trifling oppoſition to his wiſhes, was the ſureſt method of exciting them. It was this which had induced her to artfully perſuade him that ſhe had uſed every endeavour to perſuade Madame de Sorcy to join their ſociety, but all in vain, as the peculiar character of her couſin bordered on miſanthropic rudeneſs, which never yielded to kindneſs or civility. On finding them together in the morning, the fear of having her ambitious views deſtroyed, had deprived her of the power of ſuppreſſing the firſt emotions of her vexation. On reflection, ſhe recollected, that in order to deceive Sir Edmond, it would be neceſſary to

feign an appearance of ſatisfaction, when it happened that ſhe could not avoid having Malvina with them.

Thus, by ſuppreſſing the anxiety ſhe felt, ſhe behaved with uncommon attention and kindneſs to her couſin, and took infinite pains to render herſelf amiable, which ſhe was perfectly capable of, when ſhe pleaſed; but this evening ſhe was particularly agreeable; every one perceived it, and Malvina in particular. Thus, as her ſelf-love was gratified, it rendered her in ſome degree leſs fearful, that her ſchemes might be abortive, and placed her ſo much at her eaſe, from her mind being a little relieved, that it gave a grace to all her actions. The ſpirited and ſenſible converſation of Sir Edmond, and the inſtructive and ſententious diſcourſe of Mr. Prior, would have rendered it rather too ſerious, if Malvina had not tempered its effect, by giving it an affecting and intereſting turn, proceeding from

from the penſive tendency of her diſpoſition. As to Mrs. Melmor, ſhe was only the echo of Mrs. Burton, by exclaiming, at the concluſion of every ſentence, delightful! charming! and looking round, as much as to ſay, how will you anſwer to that? If it had not been for this, her preſence would have had no more effect on the company, than if ſhe had been a part of the furniture. Her daughter poſſeſſed no other charm for converſation, than what gaiety, with ſhort ſentences, afforded, powerful auxiliaries, with thoſe who poſſeſs only a ſuperficial mind. She was not the leaſt calculated to join in a ſerious and continued converſation. She was alſo extremely fond of ridiculing all thoſe whom ſhe obſerved were partial to ſuch rational amuſement; and for ſome time, Mr. Prior and Madame de Sercy, were the objects of her raillery. She hoped to have gained Sir Edmond to join her, as ſhe well knew his talent for

ſatire, which is rarely united with ſtal lity and goodneſs.

But his knowledge was extenſive, a he was in poſſeſſion of ſo great a ſhare good ſenſe, as well as wit, that he cou adapt his humour to the company, a be as ſerious in the world, as ſolitude. She perceived this with vex tion, and was alſo irritated by the pl ſure he appeared to enjoy in converſi with Malvina, as it obliged her to rema ſilent. She ſat pouting in a corner, a though Malvina frequently addreſſed h in diſcourſe, ſhe ſcarcely returned her anſwer, and the tone and manner of h reply determined Malvina not to addr her again.

At laſt Miſs Melmor, tired of perfor ing a part ſo unnatural to her charact aroſe with viſible ill humour, and ſeat herſelf before the piano, which was the other end of the room, and perfor

of ſeveral pieces. Malvina was the firſt who went to hear, commending her taſte and brilliant execution in the higheſt terms. Miſs Melmor looked at Malvina with an expreſſion which informed her, that her praiſes were totally indifferent to her; and calling to Sir Edmond, propoſed to him, their ſinging an Italian duet together. No, no, ſaid Mrs. Burton, as we are all together, try ſome of thoſe French operas! Oh, ſaid Malvina, looking over the books, I ſee you have here Armides, Alceſtes, and Oedipe, thoſe chef d'oeuvres of our nation; ah, my dear Mrs. Burton, I perceive your heart ſtill retains a taſte for the productions of France.

"For my part, cried Miſs Melmor, diſdainfully, I do not think any thing ſo cold and dull as that language, and I think it impoſſible that any one can ſay what is either ſweet or agreeable, who uſe it. Intreat Madame de Sorcy to ſpeak a few words, replied Sir Edmond, for I

am certain ſhe will convince you of your error. Perhaps not, retorted ſhe, with increaſed contempt, and ſpeaking low—my opinion is not ſo eaſily changed, my head is not ſo ſoon elevated, that a word will turn it. Ah, it is not the head that is in danger with her, ſaid Sir Edmond. The heart you mean, replied ſhe, ironically: but happily for ſome people, they have nothing to riſque from that party. But, if they are believed when they ſay they have, like ſo many others, they will be deceived.

During this converſation, which Malvina appeared not to notice, but of which ſhe heard every ſyllable; while Mrs. Burton was gone into the next room to look for the ſecond part of Oedipus, with which ſhe returned, before Sir Edmond had time to reply, which diſappointed him not a little; though much leſs ſo than Malvina. Let us ſee, Kitty, ſaid Mrs. Burton, placing the muſic on the deſk before

fore her, if we cannot accompany you in this beautiful trio? Miſs Melmor tried it, but ſhe had only execution without taſte. She played like a maſter, yet ſhe did not diſtinguiſh better than a ſcholar, and therefore it was impoſſible for them to accompany her.

I am certain ſaid Sir Edmond, Madame de Sorcy will ſucceed better. If I ſhould, returned Malvina, I ſhall deſerve not the leaſt merit, as I have been accuſtomed to this muſic from my infancy. Ah, then, I am not the leaſt ſurpriſed that you have ſuch a languiſhing air, ſaid Miſs Melmor, for it muſt be a moſt inſipid amuſement, quite ſufficient to damp the ſpirits.

If the Italian muſic pleaſes you better, let us leave this, replied Malvina, with the utmoſt ſweetneſs. No, no, couſin, ſaid Mrs. Burton, take her place, and let this divine harmony, make us for

a while forget the howling winds which ſeem to live only in theſe mountains; and fancy ourſelves in our own country.

Miſs Melmor abruptly riſing, rudely puſhed aſide her chair, and ſeated herſelf at a diſtance, as if determined not to hear. By the aid of a light finger, and an excellent ear, Malvina executed the moſt difficult parts, with taſte and eaſe. It was very poſſible to have a more brilliant execution, but Malvina poſſeſſed the power when ſhe played, of ſpeaking to the heart.

Mrs. Burton was ſoon tired, though ſhe was anxious to have it believed that ſhe was paſſionately fond of muſic, and by always aſſerting this, ſhe had perſuaded herſelf that it was really the caſe. But one hour devoted to harmony, was as much as ſhe could ſupport. Beſides the preſence of Malvina was a puniſhment

to her; her talents chagrined her, and to relieve herſelf from ſo painful a ſituation ſhe feigned a ſlight indiſpoſition, and under that pretext, obliged all the company to retire.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE NURSE.

WITHOUT knowing to what particularly to attribute it, Malvina felt that evening had paſſed more pleaſant than uſual to her. She fancied it had alſo been obſerved, and ſhe thought ſhe might be conſtrained by theſe engagements, if ſhe continued to go down every day. With this idea, ſhe waited till the next day, with a curioſity mingled with inquietude, to hear if her couſin had mentioned it. But nothing tranſpired, her dinner was ſerved as uſual; in the evening, though tempted to join the party, yet

yet she was fearful of going down, she secretly wished to join them, and she attributed this desire only to the hope of amusing her griefs: but, if she had only this motive, it would not have required so much reflection and solicitude: she hesitated, because she had another, and which, without endeavouring to develope it herself, she intuitively felt that others might. She remained solitary and alone. The days passed: Mrs. Burton went frequently to see her, with a view to prevent her going down, she even avoided speaking on the subject to Malvina, who dared not propose it; and always pretended to her nephew, that she had used the most pressing entreaties, to induce her to join them, but all in vain.

Things were in this train, when one morning, Frances came running to her mother's chamber out of breath, saying, Anzoletta is below, mama, as the school is shut to day, she has come to play with

with me; will you let us go and r
ſnow balls in the court? And wh
Anzoletta, my dear? Oh, it is that
girl who ſung ſo pretty, and who ſp
like us. Sir Edmond's god-daug
ſaid Malvina, bluſhing a little. Yes,
ma, but that does not prevent her
being good. No, my love, quite the
trary, Sir Edmond I believe is very g
himſelf. Indeed, mama I would you
lieve that our Tomkins is always te
me that he is not; that he is a ſtory-te
and only makes believe to be good,
he may deceive people; and a g
many other things which I have quite
got. You are quite right to forget
the ill you hear ſaid of others; but
my love, and join your companion.
little creature kiſſed her, and joyf
went to enjoy this permiſſion.

Malvina turning to Tomkins, ſaid, w
do you repeat ſuch things to the ch
tales which you ought not to pay
attent

to? I am very certain, madam, are not tales, and I am ſure I uttered half of what I hear daily. pe you will not make Frances dant of all the reports the ſer- nuſe you with. Certainly not, for when Mrs. Taffe comes to we always take care to con- whiſpers. Ah, madam, if you now how Sir Edmond behaves. You may diſpenſe with hear it, Tomkins, replied Malvi- have not the leaſt curioſity to be ed with it.

en left the room, not without ſight wiſh to know in what man- Edmond behaved himſelf, but been even more powerful, ſhe ve been hurt to ſatisfy herſelf, ing to the chit chat of a chamber. Without preciſely knowing e the crimes of which Sir Ed- is accuſed, ſhe gueſſed what they poſſibly

poſſibly might be, and notwithſtanding her uſual lenity, ſhe did not feel inclined to grant any in his favor.

With theſe ideas, ſhe went down to the court—Anzoletta came to her in an affectionate manner, and Frances was profuſe in the praiſes of her little companion. Malvina amuſed herſelf by running with the children, in order to keep herſelf warm. She ſaw Sir Edmond at a little diſtance, walking very quick. On obſerving her, he bowed, but paſſed on without ſtopping. Malvina paid no attention to him, and in her preſent diſpoſition, ſhe had not the leaſt wiſh to know any thing concerning him. She was, however, ſurpriſed at the cool attention he paid, as ſhe was looking which way he went, when Anzoletta came, and whiſpered, "I think I can gueſs where you are going.—Perhaps you will not know, Anzoletta. You may ſee, but he never will tell.

any body, when he is going to ſerve one; but if you will go with me, I ſhew you, and then you will ſee I not deceived.

he little girl ſet off a running, Frances Malvina following, not that ſhe wiſh- ɔ ſurpriſe Sir Edmond, but only to ent the children of being guilty of indiſcretion, and keep them away. called after them, but could not e them hear, as they kept running. :n they had reached the door of a l low dwelling, in one of the moſt ed parts of the park, Anzoletta ſtop- and laying her finger on her lips, , ſaid ſhe to Malvina, or he will us; and gently puſhing open the ', ſhe ſtept in on tiptoe, and taking ina's hand, ſhe pointed to a glaſs ', where ſhe obſerved at one end of cent chamber, Sir Edmond, leaning he back of an eaſy chair which ſup- ed an elderly woman, who appeared pale

pale and languiſhing. That is good M
Norton, my god-father's nurſe, whiſpe
Anzoletta; ſhe was taken very ill
morning; and I ſuppoſe they have he
of it at the caſtle: it was for that rea
Sir Edmond went ſo haſtily, for he i
good, and ſhe loves him very much.

Affected by this pleaſing picture,
beholding a young man who was repreſ
ed ſo frivolous, fulfilling the moſt pi
duties by a ſick and ſuffering wom
Malvina could not help reproaching
ſelf for the diſadvantageous opinion
had entertained of him a moment bef
How freely did ſhe forgive him for
attending more particularly to her,
ſuch an excellent motive in view!
would have been miſerable to have
tained him an inſtant. Malvina was
one of thoſe women who wiſhed to ar
the attention; it is vanity alone which
pects ſuch unlimited ſway: real l
however violent it may be, in a pure

virtu

virtuous mind, would bluſh at the idea of uſurping one moment that could be dictated to humanity. Not that Malvina was in love with Sir Edmond; I only aſſert, that had ſhe loved him or any other, it was in her character to think thus. The influence of a good action on ſuch a mind as her's, was much more dangerous than all the paſſionate expreſſions or actions which reaſon can reſiſt.

Thus, while her attention was occupied by the affecting picture before her; little Frances, who was extremely cold, and tired of waiting ſo long, pulled her mother's robe, and intreated her to go. Malvina did not immediately attend to her, which occaſioned the child to raiſe her voice; on this, Sir Edmond turned his head, and coming towards the door, to ſee from whence the noiſe proceeded, perceived them. Malvina, alarmed at being ſurpriſed by him in ſuch a ſituation, as if ſhe was prying into his conduct, wiſh-

ed

ed to eſcape unperceived, but that was impoſſible. She thought that her endeavouring to conceal herſelf, would have a worſe appearance; than his finding her there and whatever it might coſt her, ſhe was determined to ſtay where ſhe was.

Sir Edmond, on obſerving her, uttered an exclamation of ſurpriſe, and Malvina, with her eyes caſt down, while a deep bluſh dyed her countenance, replied timidly; you muſt attribute my indiſcretion to the affection of your god-daughter, for it was ſhe who conducted me here, purpoſely that ſhe might preſent you in the moſt amiable point of view. Come in, madam, come in, I beg of you, replied Sir Edmond, rather confounded: this ſight, though ſo afflicting, will not terrify you. Come and contribute your kind aſſiſtance, to ſoothe and fortify the mind of my good nurſe, againſt the terrors of death. She is imploring the divine *mercy*, and your timely entrance will enable

able her to perform it with greater advantage, as ſhe may ſafely imagine ſhe beholds an angel near her. Is ſhe then ſo extremely ill, enquired Malvina, as ſhe advanced, perhaps it would be proper to ſend for Mr. Prior?

The good woman heard her, and raiſing her feeble voice with apparent difficulty—No, no, ſaid ſhe, there is no occaſion, his fine words would not afford me ſo much comfort as the kindneſs and friendſhip of my dear ſon. How much did this eulogium raiſe him in the eyes of Malvina, and her good opinion, allowed her to ſpread the mantle of benevolence over his other vices, and veil them from her view! Tears fell from her eyes, as ſhe took the parched hand of the patient ſufferer. You ſeem very ill, my good mother, ſaid ſhe? Malvina's accents were ſo extremely gentle and ſweet, that it rouſed her attention, when looking at her, ſaid, I believe you are *the Lady* that

Mrs.

Mrs. Burton brought to ſee the ſick perſons, a little while ſince? They all ſpoke of you, you relieved them, and each received a benefit from you.—I thank God that He has not taken me before I ſaw you again. Do not ſpeak ſo much, my good mother, interrupted Sir Edmond, who appeared entirely occupied with the ſituation of his nurſe; you will exhauſt your ſtrength; take ſome of this cordial, and inform us if you wiſh for the preſence of Mr. Prior. Anzoletta has been to fetch him, ſaid Frances, who had hid herſelf in Malvina's robe, fearful of looking at Mrs. Norton, leſt ſhe ſhould ſee her expire.

I am aſtoniſhed that when any one is ill, Mr. Prior is not immediately informed of it, ſaid Malvina, to a perſon who appeared to be a relation of the good woman's? Oh, madam, ſhe replied, he is ſo much engaged, that one is fearful of diſturbing him, he is always writing in his cloſet fine diſcourſes certainly; but this employment

nent does not leave him time to
d ſee us; not that he has ever re-
y one when ſent for, no, I do not
r as to ſay that, and I know alſo
an ſay very fine things.

ntrance of Mr. Prior put an end
ood woman's diſcourſe. The firſt
hich arreſted his attention (even
he ſick woman) was Malvina,
e approached, ſaying to her; you
e here to witneſs this terrible mo-
his moment, when the trembling
leſs ſoul is on the borders of an
n world. Mr. Prior, ſaid Sir
l, in a whiſper, pointing to his
ill you endeavour to ſpeak a few
f comfort which may inſpire her
titude, and tranquiliſe her heart?
a aroſe, and reſigning her place
Prior, ſhe aſſiſted Sir Edmond to
the nurſe in her chair. Well, my
lrs. Norton, ſaid Mr. Prior, your
a undoubtedly fails, and your

trembling heart may fail alſo; but an all powerful God will be your defence; rely entirely on his mercy, and he will ſupport you for ever; even now, though the vale of death opens before you, he will comfort and be near you.

Ah, ſir, His will be done and not mine —I ſubmit without murmuring; hoping our Lord and Saviour will intercede for me. Confide in the clemency of the moſt holy Father and Son, my good Norton.—He is good and merciful, and when he calls us to himſelf when we are duſt, He with infinite goodneſs, will pardon us, that we may know he ought to be loved much more than he is feared. He can witneſs I never did evil to any perſon, and why ſhould I doubt his mercy? But if I regret life, it is only on the account of my poor family who will remain in miſery; and, continued ſhe, while I lived I gave part of all the benefits I received from my ſon Edmond; but on loſing me what

what will become of them? I will take care of them, my good mother, said Sir Edmond, with energy: be assured they shall not want for any thing, while I have it to bestow. I know that my dear Sir Edmond has an excellent heart, said his nurse, while the last drops of nature's feeling fell from her eyes; I trust to your promises, but you are not always here. But I shall, interrupted Malvina, and I will endeavour to supply his place. Yes, my mother, added Sir Edmond, gratified at having it in his power to enter into an engagement in concert with Malvina, we will both give you our promise, that we will ever remember the welfare and interest of your children; Malvina held out her hand as a testimony of her part of the agreement, which Sir Edmond eagerly seized, and placed it between his own on the knees of the dying woman, who, affected by their actions, and perfectly easy with regard to her family, faintly articulated these words: "Let me now, O Lord,

depart in peace"?—and expired in a few moments after.

On their return to the caſtle, the countenance of Mr. Prior was more grave; that of Malvina more thoughtful; even Sir Edmond was ſerious; but ſoon regaining his uſual vivacity, as he removed from the melancholy ſpectacle, he ſaid, Churchmen, I think, have not much to do; they may be very good, and are uſeful by their writings, but they can never perſuade me that they are ſo uſeful to the general order, as a good and honeſt creature who has paſſed her life in continual labour, and without having enjoyed her exiſtence, terminated it in miſery. And who has informed you that ſhe did not enjoy it, replied Mr. Prior? Does not happineſs belong as much to the children of virtue as to the favorites of fortune? and with this title, has not Mrs. Norton lived more ſatisfied than—than perhaps yourſelf?

Faith,

Faith, that is very likely, replied Sir Edmond; in the manner in which things are arranged here below, I am convinced that the moſt brilliant ſituations are not always the moſt happy. In the courſe of a life which we may regard in every reſpect, as fortunate, yet I have experienced many more hours of ennui than pleaſure; and I have often had occaſion to doubt the goodneſs of that power who has ordained that we ſhould receive ſo little good, with ſo much evil.

Theſe words irritated Mr. Prior, and regarding Sir Edmond with indignation, he ſaid, in a tone the moſt emphatic; What art thou, ſon of man, thou who but yeſterday was raiſed from the duſt, that thou ſhould dare to arraign thy Creator? Where is your title to criticiſe the order of the univerſe; thou, whoſe lot is ſo far above what thy virtues give thee a right to expect? I aſſure you, Mr. Prior, ſaid Sir Edmond, ſmiling, that I am very ſen-

ſible of my faults, and, in conſequence, have a very mean opinion of my merit. But, if God wiſhed me without faults, why did he not create me perfect, why permit the Devil to ſend me ſo many temptations, if he intends to puniſh me afterwards for having yielded to them? Why does he render thoſe ſins ſo lovely, which he prohibits me from loving, and how can I be ſo guilty, when I only uſe what he has given me? Perhaps, it is all your own fault, replied Malvina; for if you are warned by your conſcience at the time that you are tempted by the paſſions; if you are ſenſible of the good, while committing the evil; then, in falling, your reaſon muſt inform you that you might have reſiſted.

Sir Edmond bluſhed, and turning to Mr. Prior, remember, ſaid he, the purport of what has been ſaid, and how much might be made of it; it may be of uſe when in the pulpit; when you wiſh to awaken

awaken the conſcience of ſinners; and open their eyes: but, continued he, there would be wanting that peculiar look and geſture, and thoſe charming lips, where the graces repoſe near wiſdom. They had now reached the caſtle—Mr. Prior left them, and Malvina was retiring to her room, when Sir Edmond preventing her, ſaid, ah! why madam, do you always fly from us, always impenetrable to the wiles and intreaties of Mrs. Burton? What intreaties, ſhe replied, a little ſurpriſed? But I ſuppoſe you are ignorant that your couſin is offended at the obſtinacy (pardon me the word—for it was ſhe that ſaid it) with which you refuſed her in making one of the ſociety? Malvina ſmiled, you are in jeſt, Sir Edmond; certainly my couſin could not alledge ſuch complaints againſt me.

I poſitively aſſure you, madam, that not one day has elapſed without my enquiring why we are not to ſee you? and

each time I was informed that your couſin had repeatedly uſed every effort for that purpoſe, but they were always ineffectual. Malvina could not but perceive this was premeditated by Mrs. Burton, yet ſhe could not develope the motive which induced it; and replied with ſome embarraſſment:—but if I had reſiſted the entreaties of my couſin, why ſhould you ſuppoſe? That you would yield to mine, interrupted Sir Edmond, with quickneſs.—No, madam, I have not the preſumption; but as you did not live ſo ſecluded before my arrival, it is a ſufficient proof that my preſence is diſagreeable to you; and in conſequence, you muſt wiſh my abſence.

You interpret my conduct in a very unfavorable light, ſir, ſaid Malvina, rather vexed, it is not you who are the occaſion, but it proceeds from many beloved recollections which alone cauſes me to prefer ſolitude; and if I had imagined

gined that my ſecluſion would have given Mrs. Burton the leaſt diſcontent, I had rather have,——My aunt, my aunt, exclaimed Sir Edmond, taking the hand of Malvina, and leading her to Mrs. Burton's apartment. Here madam, is Madame de Sorcy, who ſays that I am in raillery, when I aſſure her you have been unhappy in being deprived of her ſociety: join your intreaties with mine, my dear aunt, and let us ſee if we cannot prevail.

Mrs. Burton bluſhed, but immediately taking his part—my couſin knows, ſaid ſhe, how dear her preſence is to me; and if I was unwilling to reſtrain her love of retirement, ſhe will appreciate my being ſo diſintereſted as to prefer her tranquillity to my pleaſure. But ſince ſhe is leſs anxious with regard to it, I ſhall congratulate her on the change with pleaſure. This equivocal reply of Mrs. Burton's left Malvina in an uncertainty; when Sir

Edmond, impatient to gain one more p
fitive, ſaid, I perceive, aunt, that it
decided, and I muſt leave you; for whi
I am with you, Madame de Sorcy wi
not willingly come among us.

I agree to your determination, E
mond, haſtily interrupted Mrs. Burto
you are loſing your time here, both duti
and engagements call you to Edinburg
Return there, and then my fair couſ
will be at liberty.

It will not be that gentleman who r
ſtrains my liberty, ſaid Malvina, gravel
whether he goes or ſtays, my inclinatic
will not make me remain leſs alone, n
his preſence prevent me from yieldin
to your deſire; if it is true, madam, th
you really value my company. Mr
Burton had no alternative; ſhe could n
refuſe this propoſal, and ſhe recollecte
that as ſhe could not avoid Sir Edmond
ſeeing Malvina, it would be much be

t

ter that it ſhould be in her preſence; and it was therefore agreed, that Malvina ſhould for the future make one of their ſociety, as ſhe had done before the arrival of Sir Edmond.

CHAP. X.

CONVERSATION.

DURING dinner, Mrs. Burton was acquainted with the death of the good Mrs. Norton, which had been the occaſion of the interview between Sir Edmond and Malvina. She had not even heard that the poor woman was ill; for as ſhe never intereſted herſelf concerning any one, ſhe never was informed of their misfortunes. The peaſants, of whom ſhe boaſted ſo much of protecting, were afflicted, and died without her being acquainted with it. Abſorbed by ambition, ſhe maintained

maintained a conſtant correſpondence with Lord Stafford, that they might remain faithful to their engagements, and earneſtly preſſed her nephew to go and fulfill them. But each returning day, Sir Edmond found a freſh excuſe to evade his departure; never had he yet made ſo long a ſtay at the caſtle.

Miſs Melmor claimed all the honor to herſelf; but Mrs. Burton foreſaw the true reaſon, and it gave her great anxiety: ſhe was continually deviſing means which ſhe thought the moſt likely to withdraw her nephew, or render him at variance with Malvina. But, with ſuch a character as Sir Edmond, haughty and independent, it was neceſſary to uſe perſuaſion inſtead of authority. Mrs. Burton, ſelfiſh and ambitious, had not an ingredient of gentleneſs in her compoſition. On the contrary, Malvina was mild and unaſſuming; how then could ſhe create a difference with her, without giving a juſt cauſe of complaint;

complaint; which, perhaps, would only render her ſtill more intereſting to Sir Edmond, and what would ſhe gain by it? Malvina was at liberty to reſide wherever ſhe thought proper. Could ſhe prevent her nephew from ſeeing her with leſs liberty than at Burton Hall; and he might become acquainted with the means ſhe had employed to get rid of her.

Under this perplexity, ſhe determined to inform her couſin of the projected alliance which her ſanguine hopes encouraged. She, in conſequence of this, repreſented Sir Edmond as a very diſſipated young man, without principle, fond of intrigue, and who only declined the honorable marriage which was propoſed to him, becauſe it would be a preventative to his profligacy. You may imagine the continual anxiety I labour under, my dear, ſhe continued (with a feigned confidence) and notwithſtanding the vices of my nephew, I love him tenderly, and I will

will obtain him an eſtabliſhment which might raiſe him to the higheſt rank, and would draw him from theſe low intrigues. I have given him the promiſe of all my fortune, of which I ſhall deprive myſelf to benefit him.—Truly grateful to me, for my intentions, he has acceeded to my wiſhes with alacrity: and, certain of his conſent, I have engaged my word to anſwer for him; and every thing is far advanced, with Lady Mary Summerhill, who, on his account, has refuſed the firſt offers in the kingdom; but what gives me inconceiveable uneaſineſs, is, the fear of his neglecting a promiſe, the performance of which, I have pledged my word for the validity of. Dear girl, grant me your aſſiſtance, and point out to him the impropriety of his conduct, and endeavour to perſuade him of the neceſſity of his returning to Edinburgh.

Dear madam, ſaid Malvina, what influence can I have over the will and opinions

nions of Sir Edmond? Very little, I believe, ſaid her couſin, for I have remarked, that he has paid leſs attention to you than to any other woman he has ever known, perhaps, becauſe you are not one of thoſe lively and ſhowy girls who amuſe him, and are ſimilar to himſelf. Yet, if you do not ſuit his taſte, he certainly eſteems you, and I ſhall be aſtoniſhed if he does not make a little ſacrifice to gain your's; and though your reflections ſhould not have all the effect I could wiſh, they may produce ſome impreſſion.

I aſſure you, replied Malvina, that I ſhould be much embarraſſed at the idea; as I am fearful it will appear very ſingular to Sir Edmond, that I ſhould interfere in an affair to which he may ſuppoſe me an abſolute ſtranger—and that I ſhould intrude my advice on one who never aſked it of me. But, my dear, ſaid Mrs. Burton, it is only general remarks that I would mention before him; only to obſerve,

e, that when a man has given a woman
ıopes of his marrying her, that it is
ırdonable to neglect or diſappoint
he fulfilling of ſuch engagement: and
no union can be happy, but by the
ence and dignity which it may con-
Thus, you can throw out ſome hints;
if he ſhould pretend not to under-
l it, you can make a few additions to
ort what I ſay; at leaſt, added ſhe,
:eiving that Malvina appeared rather
ous) and fixing on her a ſteady and
:iniſing look, if there is not ſome par-
ar reaſon which deters you.

ıe ſuſpicions which this laſt ſentence
ıded, did not eſcape Malvina. Of
ſervice could either her ſilence or
ce be to either party concerned in
union: as the whole of it appeared
:r more calculated to gratify the am-
ın of Mrs. Burton, than to promote
ıappineſs of Sir Edmond. In this un-
ıinty, ſhe determined not to reply,
but

but wait to hear if the conclusion of the conversation might not furnish her with something more to the purpose, which she could answer with greater satisfaction to herself.

But Mrs. Burton had said only a few words, when Miss Melmor entered the room with the newspaper in her hand. Ah! my dear madam, cried she, only see, here is the account of a grand ball my Lord Stanhope is about to give at Edinburgh. What, is the brother of Lady Mary Summerhill grown so gay, enquired Mrs. Burton, of her nephew, who had followed Miss Melmor?

Yes, replied he, with the utmost indifference. Oh, what infinite joy it would give me, if I could but be there, said Miss Melmor. I dare say it would; but you, Edmond, will undoubtedly make a point of hastening to Edinburgh for that purpose, said Mrs. Burton, in a tone of severity.

vity. For what reaſon, madam, do you imagine that I ſhould wiſh to leave the preſent ſociety, and at this inclement ſeaſon, ſeek to participate of an amuſement, which the love of idleneſs may render pleaſing, but which from habit, to me, has become dull and inſipid. I do not mean for the ſake of the amuſement, Edmond, but the company: to make one of ſuch a ſelect and brilliant party, is what ought to induce you to be there.

Ah, madam, if you did but know the faſtidious monotony which at preſent reigns in the great world! But the ladies, Edmond, can you have forgot that faſcinating part of the world? The ladies do not now take any pains, or wiſh to be at the trouble of adorning it; they have become ſo inſipidly tireſome and frivolous, that their ſociety is uniformly fatiguing: for if one utters only one word of ſincerity, they will immediately reproach you with having forgot the

the ton of good company; a phraſe at preſent ſynonimous with dullneſs and inſipidity. You are become extremely difficult, replied Mrs. Burton, ſuppreſſing her vexation; and I am really curious to know what can have produced ſuch an unexpected change.

At theſe words, Miſs Melmor drew up with an air of ſelf complaiſance, as much as to ſay, it is I who am the cauſe. Malvina, who had not the ſlighteſt idea that ſhe had the leaſt concern in any thing that had been ſaid, continued her work, without paying any attention to them: Sir Edmond made no reply to his aunt, who added, after a moments reflection—Well ſir, if it is really true, that pleaſure is fatigue, and that women are tireſome, I ſhall begin to draw a happy omen, and flatter myſelf with your reformation; as from the moment that the world begins to diſpleaſe, and retirement becomes agreeable, we ſeek to embelliſh it, by bringing

bringing a companion to participate it with us: at leaſt, you are not very diſtant from entering into a ſerious union, and are going to realize a promiſe which you have given. Say rather that you have adviſed me to give, madam. You then are guilty of a little artful chicanery, Edmond, for without your poſitive conſent, you well know, that the lady and her family would not have looked on the marriage as a ſettled affair; and I deſire to know, if you do not imagine that this young lady will expect you at her brother's entertainment; and if you have given her reaſon to expect you, are you not very blameable in diſappointing her hopes?

Faith, madam, replied he, with quickneſs, I have never ſpoken to her in any manner than I have uſed to every other woman; a few compliments ſcattered by chance among them; which is a kind of traffic I am ſurfeited with from uſe, and which experience makes one neglect,

neglect; a ſort of falſe coin with which we are deceived, though the fault originates with thoſe who receive it, more than thoſe who give.

Malvina raiſed her head, and looked at him ſteadily. He appeared embarraſſed and agitated as he ſat. Mrs. Burton replied, perhaps you may accuſe Lady Mary Summerhill of having too eaſily believed the proteſtations you made her; but I think it will be without reaſon, when you recollect the manner in which they were offered; but ſince you are ſo profound in the art of deceiving women, it neither evinces a good heart, or generoſity, in blaming them, if they are the victims of your dangerous artifices. Really, madam, interrupted Sir Edmond, mortified at receiving theſe reproaches in the preſence of Malvina, I was never either falſe or perfidious.—I acknowledge I have employed artifice in my intercourſes with women, but the reaſon was, be-

cauſe

ſuſe I could not pleaſe by any other means.

In the world, their coquettry keeps us in continual warfare with them, therefore it is neceſſary to defend oneſelf; and conſequently, we are not blameable, if we make uſe of their own weapons. Beſides, do we not ſee that they glory in the artifice they employ; then why ſhould we be condemned, and that imputed to us as a vice of the heart, when they conſider it as an additional advantage?

I believe, ſaid Malvina, ſeriouſly, that if art is looked upon with indulgence in women, it is only to be attributed to thoſe diſagreeable moments of dependence which they are unavoidably obliged to undergo: and for this reaſon, perhaps, nature has kindly given this means, in order to alleviate ſuch depreſſing ſenſations. But are not men debaſed, when they take advantage, and make uſe of ſuch weapons againſt

againſt the weaker beings? They, who have the power of independence; ought they not alſo to be ſincere? When there is no occaſion to make uſe of artifice, yet men employ it to deceive, and not only to deceive, but injure others.

Madame de Sorcy has ſaid what is very true, added Mrs. Burton; and is it not to win the heart of Lady Mary, that you have endeavoured to make her believe that you have loved her? Gracious Heaven, aunt, have a little mercy on me, replied Sir Edmond; women of the preſent day do not poſſeſs ſuch tender hearts, for how is it poſſible they ſhould break, when they are never touched? Their vanity perpetually guards them; it is that impregnable rampart which alone prevents the entrance of every other ſentiment. And is it you, Edmond, who dare to reproach them with it? You, who have ſeduced her ladyſhip's affection from no other cauſe but vanity? You

who remain here for no other reaſon but to afflict that intereſting young creature; to encreaſe her love, by exciting her anxiety; which, allow me to ſay, is a moſt deteſtable degree of vanity. What is your opinion, my dear couſin, addreſſing herſelf to Malvina; do you think I am too ſevere?

Not in your judgment, madam, but in your ſuppoſitions; for you ought not to have a doubt, but that Sir Edmond, the benevolent benefactor of the diſtreſſed, and foſter-ſon of the worthy Mrs. Norton, will haſten to put an end to the torments of the woman he loves. At theſe words, Miſs Melmor, caſting a look of anger and reproach at Malvina, ſtarted up, and immediately left the room, not being able any longer to command her patience. The diſtinction, madam, is very pointed, replied Sir Edmond, in a voice which denoted he was rather piqued; and I certainly ſhould have gone, had I not known

that as it was to be given in three days, consequently would be too late for me ſet out.

Really, is that true ſaid, Mrs. Bunto ſearching the paper with an uneaſy ai But at leaſt, Edmond, if you cannot in time to partake of the entertainment Edinburgh, you ought to return on count of the lady, as ſhe will be aſtoniſ ed at not ſeeing you at her brother's; w alſo will condemn your neglect of he and you certainly ſhould end her ſuffe ings as ſoon as poſſible. Do not yo think ſo, my dear? As I am unacquainte madam, returned Malvina, how far th affections of the young lady may be en gaged, I cannot ſo well determine; yet if they are only in a ſlight degree, an Sir Edmond has acknowledged that h has voluntarily contributed to make he imagine that he is attached to her, I hav too good an opinion of him to ſuppoſe he will ridicule what ſhe feels, and con ſequentl

ſequently he will realize her expectations.

At this moment, Miſs Melmor, who had ſoon returned, interrupted Malvina, by ſaying, Ah! do you not hear little Frances crying, ſhe has certainly hurt herſelf. I do not hear any thing, ſaid Malvina, riſing, and liſtening attentively. Oh! I am certain it was her, and I will go and ſee—Malvina, alarmed, went out with Miſs Melmor. No ſooner had they quitted the ſaloon, than the latter ſtopped, ſaying, I only feigned having heard Frances cry, that I might interrupt a converſation which was inſupportable to me; and to enquire of you, dear madam, why you wiſh Sir Edmond's abſence? If it is that you may pay your court to Mrs. Burton, I muſt inform you, that ſhe is very different from the idea you have drawn of her character, as ſhe neither poſſeſſes benevolence or generoſity—of which virtues, Mr. Prior is continually tiring us.

For your own intereſt, ſaid Malvina, with a ſmile bordering on contempt, I beg you will not endeavour to inſinuate any of thoſe injurious ſuſpicions, as they will rather prove detrimental to thoſe who aſſert them, than to thoſe who are alluded to; and as to what relates to Sir Edmond, it appeared to me, that what I ſaid, was only natural, from the ſubject in diſcourſe, that produced the ſpontaneous and ſimple replys which it required; and I am aſtoniſhed at the implication you have given it.

I aſſert, replied Miſs Melmor, I have very great reaſon to think ſo, when Sir Edmond only ſtays here on my account. —He loves me paſſionately, it is his intention to marry me, and he has promiſed to break off his engagement with Lady Mary Summerhill on that account.—But this is a ſecret, and I would not have divulged it, had I not thought, that by confiding it to you, it would convince you how

how much your advice muſt have affected us both:—but, if this affair is ſo far advanced, returned Malvina, cooly, what have you to fear? Do you ſuppoſe that a woman, who is ſuch a ſtranger as I am to Sir Edmond, can have the leaſt influence over the paſſion which he poſſeſſes for you? Not exactly that, replied the artful Kitty, but perhaps he might in ſome meaſure be influenced by thoſe high-flown ſentiments, and airs of ſuperior judgment, which you make uſe of: or elſe it is poſſible you may wiſh to make an impreſſion on him on your own account? I ſhall therefore be much obliged if you will decline in future troubling yourſelf with his concerns. On concluding theſe words, ſhe returned immediately to the ſaloon, without waiting for a reply.

Malvina, made the unwilling confidant, both of Mrs. Burton and Miſs Melmor, would have found herſelf in a very perplexing predicament, if the rectitude of

her intentions, and the purity of her heart, had not occaſioned her to look above the difficulties of her ſituation. Not being ſufficiently acquainted with the truth of what ſhe had heard, ſhe was at a loſs which ſide to take, and abſolutely determined to remain neuter, amidſt all the different intereſts of thoſe around her. But this part, the only one which was proper to her character, would equally diſoblige Mrs. Burton and Miſs Melmor; and if ſhe did not find them enemies at preſent, they might probably become ſo.

Since Miſs Melmor's confidence, Malvina had perhaps evinced more diſtance in her behaviour to Sir Edmond: ſhe never went down but when they were all aſſembled together, and when there, paid not the leaſt attention to the flattering compliments with which he conſtantly addreſſed her. She never felt at her eaſe but with Mr. Prior, whom ſhe ſaw every morning, as he went to give her a leſſon in the Erſe language.—Friendſhip, and its delightful

delightful confidence, often prolonged the leſſon till the dinner hour.

The cuſtom of the houſe was, that after breakfaſt, which was taken all together in the ſaloon, every perſon retired to their own apartments for the reſt of the morning; and Malvina was more particular in this reſpect than any other. It happened one morning, after theſe tranſactions, that miſſing Frances at the hour ſhe uſually accuſtomed her to come and receive her leſſons, ſhe went down to ſeek for her, and found her in the ſaloon, playing with Sir Edmond: on obſerving him, ſhe drew back, and calling the child to follow, ſhe was retiring, when Sir Edmond came up to her, and ſaid, ſince chance has favored me with the happineſs of being one moment alone with you, madam, permit me to hope, that I may have the felicity to prevail on you to grant me an audience of a few minutes. Malvina bluſhed, and ſlightly

bowed. Sir Edmond required no other anſwer; but ſhutting the door, and leading her to a ſeat, he placed himſelf in one near her, and thus began.

The hope that you would have taken an intereſt in my ſituation, madam, is not the motive which has prompted me to intrude on your patience: I know but too well, that you think me unworthy of inſpiring you with the ſlighteſt; but as you appeared to coincide with, and ſupport Mrs. Burton, the other day, in her deſire of my returning to Edinburgh, I wiſh to know (if it is not an improper liberty) how far my aunt has informed you of the affairs which ſhe ſays recall me there. I know very little more of them, ſir, replied Malvina, than what ſhe repeated before you: that you had promiſed your hand to a charming young lady whom you loved; that you had left her merely becauſe ſhe returned your affection; and a thouſand other trifling things, which

are

are not worth repeating. That is all, ſaid Sir Edmond, looking at her with a mixture of tenderneſs and anxiety; and that, I ſuppoſe, has been ſufficient to determine your opinion concerning me? Since you interrogate me ſo minutely, ſir, returned Malvina, I acknowledge that I have been aſtoniſhed, that the benefactor of ſo many unfortunate beings, the Godfather of Anzoletta, and the humane protector of the worthy Norton, ſhould be reproached with ſhading all his glory, by the want of probity, the high ſenſe of which, in my opinion, conſtitutes the real man of honor.

I do not pretend to exculpate myſelf from any of the vices which are attributed to me, madam, replied Sir Edmond—without doubt I have many, and I confeſs, on my coming here this time, I was far from conſidering them in the ſame point of view which I do at preſent. But, without particulariſing the motives which

induced this change; and which, perhap
ſhe who has been the cauſe of it, may r
fuſe to hear: I will for the preſent co
tent myſelf with rectifying ſeveral mi
takes, which the recital Mrs. Burton gav
you muſt have occaſioned in your min
I have never made any engagement wit
Lady Mary Summerhill, madam—neith
have I ever loved her; though perfect
beautiful, it is not of that kind whic
pleaſes me. Never, as one of our poets h
ſaid, can we account for the origin of love
it is never in the features of the counte
nance, but in the heart of the lover.
have ever been ſilent when with her; an
as ſhe poſſeſſes a frivolity and inſipidit
of character, without the leaſt ſenſibility
I leave you to imagine, if that kind of pre
ference, which ſhe has granted me, ca
in the ſlighteſt degree, diſturb her repoſe

Then, ſir, replied Malvina, perha
Mrs. Burton will condemn you for n
having informed her ſooner of the diſpo
ſition of the lady; that you might n
hav

have made ſuch advances, without you had been certain of fulfilling them. If I had not declared from the firſt moment, that I ſhould refuſe to be united to Lady Mary, replied Sir Edmond, it was only becauſe I had not any fixed ideas of conjugal felicity. I fancied, that like moſt others, I muſt reſolve to take a companion, as we take a walk; and in this light, her ladyſhip, I ſuppoſed, might do well enough: but ſince, an unexpected event has changed both my ideas and principles, and the union of marriage, which I looked upon with the utmoſt indifference, now appears to me ſo deſirable, that all my future happineſs in life depends on it: I ought to reſign Lady Mary, as my heart has already done, and without the leaſt ſcruple, becauſe, as I before informed you, I have never pledged my promiſe either to herſelf or her family. If my aunt has given her's, that muſt be her own fault, and ſhe muſt take the conſequence; I have no buſineſs with it, and I do not conſider myſelf

obliged to be anſwerable for her eng
ments, by the ſacrifice of my ha
neſs for life.—Are you not of the ſ
opinion?

Yes, ſir, replied Malvina, convi
that all he had been telling her rel
to Miſs Melmor; and I ſhould ſup
your new choice would not meet with
objections from Mrs. Burton, if
knows that your happineſs depends o
—Certainly you have only to inform
to have it confirmed; and as to
ſelf, ſir, affected by the confidence
have favored me with, be aſſured of
ſincerity of my wiſhes for the accompl
ment of all that can render you hap
This compliment was ſufficient to c
vince Sir Edmond how diſtant ſhe
from comprehending his meaning; l
the exceſſive coolneſs with which it
pronounced gave him hope, as ſuch
haviour was not natural to her; he in
gined ſhe muſt have very particu

reaſ

reaſons for it; or that ſhe was affected by ſome peculiar ſenſations.—As he did not wiſh to explain himſelf farther, until he could by ſome means aſcertain whether he was miſtaken, they ſeparated.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

SOME SLIGHT INCIDENTS.

SIR Edmond neglected no opportunity, whenever he could conway any thing tender or agreeable to Malvina, though in a manner rather disguised; and which she considered as an indirect method of addressing Miss Melmor. With this idea, of which she was assured, she listened to him, found him more amiable, and took the most lively interest in all the praises and little concerns which related to Anzoletta: yet, while this increased,

creaſed, would ſhe have the force to get the better of it, when the chimera of Miſs Melmor vaniſhed, and when we ſhall diſtinctly ſee that it was Malvina herſelf who was the object.

One evening after tea, the converſation turned on the morals and general corruption of the times, when it was interrupted by the arrival of ſome letters, which were brought to Mrs. Burton, with which ſhe retired to her cloſet. Mr. Prior, whoſe mind was occupied with compariſons and maxims, continued the ſubject, which had been interrupted by the arrival of the poſt. It is thus, that the voluptuous perſon reſembles a frothy torrent. For Heaven's ſake, cried Miſs Melmor, with quickneſs, I hope you are not going to preach—ſpare us, I entreat you, and let us enjoy the abſence of Mrs. Burton, by converſing on ſubjects that are not ſo uniformly tireſome. She immediately aſked a trifling queſtion of

of Sir Edmond, who anſwered in the ſame manner.

Mr. Prior ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and retired. Malvina took a book, and placed herſelf by the fire; and Miſs Melmor remained ſilent for a minute. Then, addreſſing Sir Edmond, ſhe enquired how long he had been conſtant to the woman he moſt loved? I ſhould be much puzzled to tell you, he replied, turning over the leaves of a book which he held in his hand, for at preſent, I think I have never been in love. At theſe words, though Malvina kept her eyes fixed on the book, ſhe ceaſed to read it. What! of all thoſe women you told me of, ſaid Miſs Melmor, has not one of them been capable of inſpiring a ſerious and ardent paſſion? Perhaps their vanity may have led them to imagine ſo, replied Sir Edmond, and I may have ſo expreſſed myſelf in a figurative ſenſe; but how dare any one give the name of love to ſuch

eternal

eternal paſſions, whoſe tranſient flame ſcarcely exiſts a month. But I cannot believe, that amidſt all the beauties of London and Edinburgh, which embelliſhed the entertainments of thoſe cities, that not one of them ſhould appear worthy of attaching you? Not one, at leaſt that ever inſpired me, or I ſhould rather ſay, that ever intereſted my heart.

Why, who then is there that can ever pleaſe you? (ſaid ſhe, ſcarcely able to conceal her delight) as if certain that he would whiſper, 'it is you alone.' Inſtead of which, he opened the book which he held in his hand, and read the following paragraph, with unuſual animation.

"Among the many women which attracted my eyes, and intereſted my "heart, more than once the melody of "a voice has captivated my attentive "ear.—Many beauties may pleaſe me; "one by the poſſeſſion of one virtue, and "another

" another by a different one; but one
" perfect in every thing, I have never
" found; there has always been either a
" blemish, or a want of grace, which
" destroyed the full effect of their charms.
" But she alone is accomplished in every
" thing—Heaven has formed her the
" most perfect of all his creatures."

As he read the last sentence, he cast such a look of tenderness and expression on Malvina, that she felt it penetrate to her soul, and from that moment, she thought that if he had really loved Miss Melmor, he would have fixed his looks on her. Miss Melmor certainly made a similar reflection, for she appeared gloomy and ill humoured to every one during the remainder of the evening; but particularly so to Malvina.

Soon after Mrs. Burton's return into the saloon, every one was preparing to retire, when she said, apropos; Edmond,

it

it will not be long before your new apartment will be ready for you; and at your return, you ſhall take poſſeſſion of it. No, no, thank you, replied Sir Edmond, in a tone of animation. you may reſerve it for ſome one elſe, I do not wiſh to quit my preſent one—it is from henceforth ſacred, added he, in a low voice, and fixing his eyes on Malvina. This ſentence petrified her to her ſeat, till recollecting herſelf, ſhe immediately roſe to retire.

Mrs. Burton did not hear this ſpeech, and went out, ſaying, he was at liberty to do juſt as he pleaſed. But, Malvina had but too well underſtood it: inſtantaneouſly, a ſecret emotion invaded her heart; confuſed, and agitated, ſhe had again forgot it was time to retire, when Miſs Melmor, on obſerving her ſo near Sir Edmond, abruptly exclaimed, if it is being near Sir Edmond, that detains Madame de Sorcy, I think he ought to be very proud of it; for it is the firſt time

time ſince ſhe has been here, that ſhe forgot herſelf. This reflection, wh was but the truth, had its influence or who heard it, except Mrs. Melmor.

Malvina aroſe in confuſion; and g to take her work-bag, which lay on table, ſhe inadvertently touched the h of Sir Edmond, and drawing it a ſuddenly, ſhe was retiring with precip tion, when ſhe perceived, as ſhe paſ in an oppoſite glaſs, that Sir Edm preſſed his lips to the place ſhe had tou ed. This trivial action, which no perceived but herſelf, increaſed her e tion; and ſurpriſed at what ſhe felt, was endeavouring to inveſtigate it, w Sir Edmond, paying his reſpects, reti As ſoon as he was gone, Miſs Mel ſaid, I cannot think what unaccounta caprice can attach Sir Edmond to apartment, unleſs he finds it more c modious for him to receive viſitants What is your opinion, my dear, added looking archly at Malvina?

Mr. Prior, incenſed that any one ſhould recall this trivial incident, with the intention of hurting the feelings of his friend, replied, with more frankneſs than he otherwiſe would—Yes, Miſs Melmor, he ought to find it ſo, and I think that you ſhould not have made the remark. Theſe words diſconcerted Kitty ſo much, that Mr. Prior was almoſt ſorry he had uttered them: ſhe bluſhed, ſtammered, and taking her mother's arm (who heard, but *did not* underſtand their purport) they *both* went up ſtairs.

Malvina, ſurpriſed and penſive, followed them ſlowly, without hearing Mr. Prior wiſh her good night. She retired to reſt, but could not ſleep; a thouſand different ideas obtruded and confuſed her thoughts. Mrs. Burton had mentioned Sir Edmond's return. He was then going. What could the ſingular anſwer which Mr. Prior made to Miſs Melmor, ſignify? Did it not intimate, that

that she sometimes went to visit Sir Edmond alone, it certainly must have been her who opened the door on the evening Malvina went to seek her Frances. Besides, Mr. Prior's answer was very pointed, and though he was severe in his judgments, she could not reproach him with being unjust. But it cannot be possible, thought Malvina, that under the eyes of a mother, Sir Edmond would be capable of seducing a simple and innocent girl. He could not so far forget the respect due to her, who received him, without restraint, as to dare to violate the sacred laws of hospitality; and the still more sacred duties of religion and honor? But was not this exactly what he had been described to her? That he was a man which no consideration would prevent from gratifying his vicious inclinations.

What then could he mean by those looks, so tender and sincere; were they the effect of artifice? The voice which seemed

emed to ſpeak from the heart, was that
ıdied? Ah! all theſe appearances
:re falſe, what could be believed?
hilſt Malvina was the prey of theſe
ſtreſſing reflections—Sir Edmond, du-
ıg the ſilence of the night, was writing
: following letter to his friend:

r Edmond Burton to Sir Charles Weymard.

If you wiſh to put an end to your
toniſhment, at my prolonged ſtay at
is place, come thyſelf; and when you
ve beheld the reaſon, if your wonder
ntinues, it will be then only at the
ea that I ſhould ever quit it. Malvina,
at name, whoſe very ſound ſoftens and
ichants, enflames and captivates my
:art—Malvina! that angelic woman, in
nom is united every beauty, and every
rtue!—Oh, Malvina, thou ſurely would
: too perfect, were thou but ſuſceptible
' love; for it is in the power of love
one to adorn that which appears to want

not

not any embelliſhment. I returne
know, Charles, from the mere cu
of wiſhing to behold that myſt
beauty, which we could not get a g
of the laſt time you was here.

From what had been ſaid of he
imagination was ſo raiſed, that I re
not to leave Burton Hall again till
certain whether the conqueſt was
the pains of attempting it. But, as th
began to appear ſo tedious before I h
hopes of being gratified, I amuſed
with the riſing attractions of Miſs
mor, by way of gaining patience,
as ſhe attributed, the quickneſs
return to herſelf, I thought proper
ceive her by that idea. Kitty, you
is handſome, and I have more rea
know it than you. I will alſo
you, that I was obliged to pay h
attention above a month, which
me, that had ſhe been leſs eaſily w
might have been a very alluring cre

and I believe I ſhall have the charity to tell her as much, as a recompenſe for thoſe favors to which I no longer attach any value.

But, what are all the pleaſures which either ſhe or any other woman can beſtow, compared with one look from Malvina—not worth a thought. Malvina has wrought a wonder, ſhe has changed me, my friend; ſhe has awakened in me, ſenſations to which I have ever, 'till now, been a ſtranger. She has touched thoſe chords in my heart which 'till now have been mute; and I never approach even the room ſhe is in, but I feel them vibrate! In her preſence, I am another being, I ſuppreſs every thought, every ſentiment, which is unworthy of her. Her pure breath ſeems to refine all who approach her; for when I am under the ſhade of her looks, I feel as if I was out of the reach of vice. Oh! Charles, this intereſting beauty ſpeaks much more to the

heart than the senses; and I would rath
aspire to her love, than ever wish
possess her; for though the attractio
her person are certainly enchanting,
those of her mind are infinitely more
and I never behold her expressive co
tenance, without saying with Dry
'contemplate that majestic temple, it
'built by celestial hands, her soul in
'divinity which inhabits it, and the ed
'is not unworthy of its God.'

I am as yet even uncertain if I am
the least agreeable to Malvina, but I hop
yes, I will hope; daring as it is, to g
her heart. I well know that it will
a long time to accomplish this; and
she will be still longer before she
ever confess as much; but this you
will please me above all, and make
continue to love and prefer her to ev
other: for in this respect, she has not
least resemblance to any I have know

I r

I rather ſuſpect Mrs. Burton had ſecretly formed the deſign of preventing my ſeeing her couſin, fearing, not without reaſon, that ſuch an aſſemblage of charms and perfections would make me diſguſted with her favorite Lady Mary Summerhill: though I really never took the trouble to make the compariſon, and did not even appreciate the little worth ſhe poſſeſſes, as I cannot bear to think of a union with her. Beſides, the unlimited gratitude which my aunt ſeems as if ſhe would ever expect, by chaining me with the promiſe of her fortune, which ſhe thinks will give her a command over all my actions; and the obligations which ſhe thinks ſhe has conferred, by this intended marriage, are ſuch a burden to me, that I wiſh to be freed from them all. I poſſeſs a haughty ſpirit, my friend; and all the treaſures of Solomon, provided the women were not included, ſhould not tempt me to part with the ſmalleſt portion of my independence.

But I muſt inform you, between ourſelves, that Kitty gives me no ſmall uneaſineſs. The little ſimpleton looks upon the mere promiſe of marriage as an indiſpenſible obligation, and imperiouſly demands the performance of it.

This is a preſumption I have not been accuſtomed to, in theſe kind of reckonings, and I am really tormented by her. My chief fear is, that ſhe will, by ſome means, make Malvina acquainted with it; and I am but too ſure, that if that amiable woman was informed of my connection with Miſs Melmor, her ideas of rectitude are ſo ſtrict and delicate, that if ſhe even loved me herſelf, ſhe would take the part of her rival, and renounce me for ever. It is therefore of the greateſt conſequence to me that ſhe ſhould be kept entirely ignorant of all that has paſſed. My only care, therefore is, to ſend Kitty from this place as ſoon as poſſible. I had the idea, in a caſe of ſuch neceſſity, of re-

quiring

quiring the aſſiſtance of one of you? But I have hit upon a more decent way, and one that, I think, will ſucceed much better, which is this: I always pretend, in the preſence of Mrs. Burton, though not when Malvina is preſent, ſuch a particular attachment to Miſs Melmor, that my reſtleſs aunt is really alarmed at it; and in order to preſerve me pure for Lady Mary, ſhe is very buſy in her endeavours to find out a ſuitable match for her pupil; which, when ſhe has determined, I know ſhe will inform me of, and I ſhall then have the appearance of humbly ſubmitting to her will, and in concert with her; I ſhall make a point of going from hence when ſhe has given her orders to her ſtupid friend for the marriage of her petulant daughter, who, after my departure, will not have any other reſource, when preſſed by the threats of Mrs. Burton, and a huſband, but to ſubmit to the alternative; at leaſt ſhe will not, I hope, think of following me, though ſhe is very capable of ſuch

a ſcheme; but in order to prevent his idle fancy, I ſhall hint as much to Mrs. Burton, that ſhe may keep a ſtrict watch over her; and as I wiſh that not the leaſt circumſtance may be known to Malvina, I ſhall inſinuate to my aunt, that for the ſake of Lady Mary Summerhill's tranquillity, it will be neceſſary to keep the hiſtory of my amours a profound ſecret. Seduced by ſuch a motive, ſhe will recommend this ſilence to Mrs. Melmoth, in a tone of authority which generally makes ſuch weak characters obey her; and as my pretty Kate will be thus terrified at the anger of Mrs. Burton, when I am not there to comfort her, ſhe will be obliged to take the huſband and hide her ſhame. Then! oh my celeſtial Malvina, I ſhall return to you, and by the perſevering attentions of love, obtain that bleſſing, which, if I gain, will raiſe me above all the monarchs on earth. Ah! Charles, when I contemplate her amiable innocence, that beauty which is without

a blemiſh

a *blemiſh*, the pure emblem of nature in the firſt creation of the world, I certainly feel that I am unworthy of her; yet, at the ſame time, I ſwear from my ſoul, that not any other ſhall ever gain her.

EDMOND B——.

CHAP. XII.

SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED—A WALK.

IT was really true, th
Sir Edward had seen Malvina,
caprice. he had attempt
Mr. Melmoth. and that he h
former than he had e
young lady had delud
hopes of marrying hi
means, indepe
he was therefo
that she might l
into her ow
to go to hi
unde

the pretence of ſettling ſome ar-
ments for their approaching union.
heſe frequent interviews, from the
htleſſneſs of Sir Edmond, and the
dence of Miſs Melmor, were
ufficiently guarded, had been ſuſ-
l by Mr. Prior, who nevertheleſs,
s was confirmed in theſe ſuſpicions,
ht it would be reprehenſible in him
mit his doubts to appear, and fear-
at Malvina, may alſo blame him,
ited impatiently for the hour of her
, in order to wait on her.

found her at breakfaſt with her
Frances. Surpriſed, though not
led, at ſeeing him at ſuch an early
ſhe begged he would take his tea
ter, and never was there ſo cool an
tion accepted with ſuch avidity.
as no ſooner ſeated by his friend,
e began the ſubject which was the
ſt his heart, and which had induced
an early viſit. Though Malvina

CHAP. XII.

SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED—A WALI

IT was really true before Sir Edmond had ſeen Malvi a moment of caprice, he had atte to gain Miſs Melmor, and that h ſucceeded much ſooner than he ha pected; for that young lady had de herſelf with the hopes of marrying and of becoming by that means, ind

[redacted]

had determined not to make any en
ries relative to that affair, yet, he
no ſooner mentioned the ſubject, t
ſhe forgot her reſolution. Mr. P
found it impoſſible to conceal any of
thoughts from her, freely told her
opinion, and his ſuſpicions. On hear
which, a lively bluſh overſpread
face, and ſhe cried, is it poſſible
the ſevere Mr. Prior, can be guilty
ſo much weakneſs, as not to have war
and reprimanded this young perſon,
ſpoken to her mother and Mrs. Burt
on the danger ſhe is in, and above
why has he not ſhewn his indignat
to that baſe man, who under the m
of virtue, bluſhes not at the corrupt
of innocence?—Ah! it is of little,
may ſay no uſe, replied he, either
warn or reprimand, except good co
accrue from it. But, when my wo
make not the leaſt impreſſion, it is b
to leave it to Divine wiſdom and j
tice, who endows the wicked with mal

as a ſelf-puniſhment; and intemperate pleaſures, as a chaſtiſement; I am perfectly certain, that was I to ſpeak to Sir Edmond, he would only ſmile at my remonſtrances, and perhaps be more indefatigable in his purſuits. Mrs. Melmor is a very weak woman, who only views things as her daughter pleaſes, and who, if ſhe was to ſcold her would ſoon finiſh, by aſking her pardon.

Mrs. Burton, from the extreme coolneſs of her diſpoſition, entirely devoid of ſenſibility, has ever been incapable of ſuch a weakneſs; and for that reaſon, imagines that this ſuperior virtue (which is in reality only negative, and ſo very eaſy) is the higheſt excellence in her character, therefore that all women ſuſpected of wanting chaſtity, ſhe regards as a ſcandal to humanity. For this reaſon was ſhe informed of the conduct of Miſs Melmor; ſhe would not only turn her out of the houſe with contempt, but

would publicly expoſe her. As to Miſs Melmor, herſelf, ſhe is merely a pretty puppet, without principles or delicacy, though ſhe does not want for cunning and addreſs, who unites a cold heart to a weak head; and perhaps might go off with Sir Edmond if ſhe thought that ſhe was ſuſpected. What then would become of her? Abandoned in a little time by her ſeducer, another might ſoon replace him; and there is no knowing where ſuch a one would ſtop, as thoſe who have dared to take the firſt ſteps in ſuch a career, would ſoon give her up to another; and in the end, ſhe perhaps might be tempted to proſtitute herſelf; and thus increaſe the number of thoſe ſhameleſs and wretched women, who have once bluſhed at the name of virtue, but ſoon ceaſe to bluſh at all! Why, ſaid Malvina, timidly, will not Sir Edmond marry Miſs Melmor? Becauſe ſhe would not ſuit him by any means; for notwithſtanding the many vices of Sir Edmond,

Edmond, his character and proſpects are brilliant, and he poſſeſſes a nobility of ſoul, and an energy of mind that is not very common; on the contrary, Miſs Melmor is truly incapable of the leaſt elevation of mind. I have already delineated to you all the vices which weakneſs entails upon itſelf; and there is not one quality which it can redeem; as beauty and wit therefore, are her only advantages, I am much deceived if they will not one day render her one of the moſt deceitful and dangerous of coquettes. Yet do you not imagine that Sir Edmond loves her? He pretends as much, and though every perſon here may endeavour to prove this to me as a truth, I cannot be convinced. For the human heart is ſuch an abyſs, that although I have been this fifteen years, endeavouring, its receſſes are not to be fathomed.

For

For my own part, ſaid Malvina, I can not believe but that he has a paſſion fo her. Undeceive yourſelf then, my goo friend, for Sir Edmond is incapable o any thing ſerious. A habit for de bauchery has tainted his heart, but wa he even ſuſceptible of experiencing ſuc a deep attachment as a real paſſion, i muſt be a very different woman indeed from Miſs Melmor, who could produc ſuch a reformation. I know but one added he, looking ſtedfaſtly at Malvina who unites all that could be wiſhed fo ſuch a purpoſe. But as the diſtanc which ſeparates them is unmeaſurable he will never dare to raiſe his hopes t her, becauſe he muſt be truly ſenſible that ſhe will never deign to look dow upon him.

Malvina bluſhed, Mr. Prior's laſt ſen tence had occaſioned an uneaſy ſenſa tion, and in order to conceal it, and avoid anſwering, ſhe aroſe and went t the

window — returned — opened ſome
ks — then cloſed them as quickly —
again walked to the window — Mr.
r, ſaid Malvina, notwithſtanding the
ſſive cold, the ſun is ſo brilliant,
it muſt be rather pleaſant on the
lers of the lake; I have never been
, and have a great inclination to
a walk that way; you muſt not go
e, ſaid Mr. Prior, will you permit
the pleaſure to accompany you?
tainly, and I am going to aſk Mrs.
ton to walk with me. She went into
reſſing-room with Frances, and they
kly returned equipped in their dou-
urred robes. They all went down,
on entering the ſaloon, ſhe per-
ed Miſs Melmor, ſeated before a
, and Sir Edmond cloſe at her ſide,
pering to her with great animation.
Burton was ſitting by the fire with
ok which ſhe pretended to be read-
but was intirely occupied with look-
in a glaſs which was oppoſite, and
which

which gave her an opportunity of seeing all that was acting behind her; and her mind absorbed in planning the future destiny of Miss Melmor.

The entrance of Malvina changed the disposition of all their thoughts as well as their employments. Sir Edmond, fearful that his particular attentions to Miss Melmor had given Malvina some suspicions, felt rather uneasy. He approached her, and murmured a few expressions of astonishment and pleasure at this unexpected visit. Miss Melmor cruelly disappointed by an incident which interrupted a conversation that was to her of infinite importance, saluted Malvina with an expression of anger, without condescending to look at her. Mrs Burton who had remarked her behaviour, was secretly rejoiced that she was thus mortified, and received Malvina with unusual kindness.

The walk was propoſed, which Mrs. Burton accepted with that affected complaiſance which plainly evinced that ſhe wiſhed it to be conſidered as a favour, for which ſhe demanded an adequate return by Sir Edmond, with that eagerneſs which the love of novelty and the pleaſure of being near Malvina muſt inſpire in ſuch a mind. Miſs Melmor accepted the invitation with a careleſs diſcontent, that was conſcious of the irkſome ſituation it would place her in, yet ſhe could not deviſe any probable excuſe to avoid going. The leafleſs trees, and the rocks covered with ice, glittered with the rays of the ſun, and reflected all the brilliant colours of the rainbow. The ſnow which cloaked all the mountains, ſhone with ſuch ſplendor, that the eyes were almoſt blinded by the light, though monotonous aſpect of the country. While contemplating the beautiful and ſublime effect of the enlightning orb of day. Mr. Prior, as his

eye

eye wandered over the ſnow-clad ear
particularly admired its effect on t
mountains; and ſaid, who will not thi
with me, on that ſublime invocati
which Oſſian made in the time of o
" O thou that rolleſt above, round
" the ſhield of my fathers! whence
" thy beams, O ſun?—thy everlaſti
" light!—thou comeſt forth in
" awful beauty—the ſtars hide the
" ſelves in the ſky: the moon cold a
" pale ſinks in the weſtern wave, l
" thou thyſelf moveſt alone: who
" be a companion of thy courſe? T
" oaks of the mountains fall, the mo
" tains themſelves decay with yea
" the ocean ſhrinks, and grows aga
" the moon herſelf is loſt in heave
" but thou art for ever the ſame, rejc
" ing in the brightneſs of thy cou
" When the world is dark with te
" peſts; when the thunder rolls and
" lightning flies; thou lookeſt in

" beau

beauty from the clouds, and laugheſt at the ſtorm.*"

While Mr. Prior repeated this with enthuſiaſm, Malvina was plunged into reverie, on recollecting the embarraſsment Sir Edmond appeared in, on her entrance into the ſaloon. She certainly was not offended at his attention to Miſs Melmor, but why was he ſo fearful of letting it appear before her. Did he wiſh to conceal it, or to deceive her? Her haughty ſoul revolted at the idea of being the object of ſuch a plan, and ſhe determined by the coolneſs of her behaviour to Sir Edmond, to convince him it would be impoſſible to ſucceed with her. She remembered every thing ſhe had heard, and all ſerved to depreciate him in her opinion. She drew a compariſon between him and Mr. Prior, much to the advantage of the latter. If the

* Oſſian's Poem of Carthon.

perſons

perſons who were the objects of this reflections, could have guessed what w paſſing in her mind, Mr. Prior wou have been gratified, and Sir Edmo chagrined; while she listened to the converſation, and remarked their diffe ent opinions, it confirmed the idea, s had recently formed. Why, said Sir E mond, do you require that we, should the men in power observe the conce they inſpire? When by their credit the may perhaps, be of infinite ſervice obliging others. That bluntneſs a candour, of which you boaſt ſo muc does it not occaſion their being le entirely to the flatterers who ſurroun them, and keep them at a diſtance fro all who poſſeſs diſcernment and rec tude, and who might perhaps be i ſervice to them, in ſpeaking their re ſentiments?

What, interrupted Mr. Prior, (wi quickneſs) when a raſcal in power, b

cau

cauſe he is ſo, and is rich, ſhall he, a deſpicable wretch, ſee himſelf received by the man of integrity, can they obſerve this, without having reaſon to believe that every thing is ſacrificed to fortune? If they diſguiſed the contempt which they really inſpire, would it not undoubtedly plunge them deeper in vice, when they were carreſſed, and conſequently encourage others, who but for that would have heſitated in imitating them.—No, no, thoſe who have felt the dignity of which a virtuous man is capable of, will never prophane the character, and thoſe who dare to compound with virtue, gives me a ſanction to think, they have never known it. What a terrible condemnation, exclaimed Sir Edmond, ſmiling. Do you know that if I was to judge of men by the ſeverity of your maxims, I doubt, I ſhould find few of the elect, and we ſhould run the riſque of being glorioufly tired in Paradiſe? I acknowledge, ſaid Malvina, that Mr.

Mr. Prior's principles are a little ſevere, but he bears the ſimilitude with thoſe Sterne mentions in his Sermons: "Such "are the huſſars who ſtrike a blow to the "right and to the left, with great adroit- "neſs, and always ſerve as auxiliaries to "virtue." At this inſtant the converſation was interrupted by the appearance of a man on one of the heights of the mountain. He ſeemed to be in years, and ſtept ſo cautiouſly, that they imagined that he muſt be blind. Mr. Prior who regarded him with great attention ſaid, that venerable gait, that time-ſilvered beard, the cautious uncertain ſtep, and that ſtaff which appears to ſerve him inſtead of his eyes, indeed the tout enſemble of this old man, recalls to my mind the image of Oſſian, ſuch as he was in the days of old; perhaps alſo, he might have ſtood on that very ſpot! Oh why have I not my pencils here that I might juſt take that fine old head. The unfortunate creature is ſurrounded by precipices, ſaid Sir Edmond,

and

and I think it will be of more utility to aſſiſt him, than to take his portrait. The rocks are ſo ſlippery and he cannot ſee. On ſaying theſe words he flew to the mountain, and climbing lightly, though not without difficulty on account of the ice, and in a ſhort time, he got up to the old man, took him by the arm, and leading him with care, he wound round the turnings of the mountain, which appeared to lead to an oppoſite direction, where from the great diſtance, they ſoon were out of ſight. Mrs. Burton, after waiting ſome time, and finding they did not appear, took the road to the caſtle. This ſcene had not been loſt upon Malvina. The generous behaviour of Sir Edmond had pleaſed her, and as they returned home, ſhe reflected upon the theory and the practice of virtue, and imagined that perhaps they were not always united, and that thoſe who ſpoke the moſt eloquently of it, were not the perſons who practiced it the beſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

ANXIETIES. THE RETURN.

THEY had waited 'till hour of ſupper in vain, for Sir Edmo but he had not appeared, every one aſtoniſhed at his abſence, and for firſt time Malvina did not return to apartment after riſing from table. was uneaſy, and ſoon became ſeriou ſo, as ſhe found night had advanc and the hours ſucceeded each oth and they ſaw no ſigns of his retu Malvina, could ſcarcely ſuppreſs fears. The ſeaſon being remarka ſevere, the ways very dangerous, perh

ght have fallen, have loſt himſelf, ot able to find an aſylum. Why not ſend ſome of the ſervants ambeaux, to ſeek, call, and aſſiſt

ows extremely hard, ſaid Mr. Prior, hen can we think of ſending the out at ſuch a late hour? Why re then let Sir Edmond be expoſed the rigour of ſuch a ſevere night? Malvina; perhaps he may have had way to conduct the old man, and returning, the darkneſs may have ken him, the cold may ſtupify him; s, at this moment, he has not even a rock to ſhelter his head. The lſo will prevent him, if he could, ſeeing his way. It is a pity that erous a being ſhould be the victim benevolence. While Malvina xpreſſed her feelings ſpontaneouſly, is agitated and diſtreſſed, the tears ed in her eyes, Mr. Prior much

affected by her anxiety went to her, and said, I am ready to obey you in every thing you shall direct for the best. Would you wish that I should assemble the servants, and myself lead them to seek for Edmond? condescend to give me your commands.

Ah, Mr. Prior, said she, has not your heart any to dictate: I am much deceived if Sir Edmond would not have found some means of assisting you in such a predicament. Mr. Prior was much cruelly hurt by this last reply, though it did not render him the less solicitous to fulfil any of her wishes, and was just going out for that purpose, when Miss Burton prevented him, by saying, had it not been for the extraordinary anxiety of my cousin, I should perhaps have been more astonished to hear both of you giving orders concerning my servants without my leave. But, on the account I mentioned, I shall excuse it, only

objeƈt to ſuch a ſtep, which
ing the men ſo much trouble,
: hardſhips they muſt ſuffer
it as this, and all, perhaps, with-
of any ſervice to Sir Edmond,
very naturally conclude he
: ſo imprudent as to offer to
ite as this, and that he is deter-
paſs the night in the cabin of
ineer.

y a pity, madam, that you did
n all this in the morning, and
perſuaded Sir Edmond that
: ſure that the old man would
ry alone. Thanks to your
ggeſtions, madam, your ne-
ot be in any danger. My
Mrs. Burton, in a tone of rail-
looking at her a moment in
what ſervice is this extreme
ſenſibility? Have you not
ſhewn that you poſſeſs it, and
e not any occaſion for farther

proofs. Really, interrupted Malvina, with ſome degree of warmth, is it Mrs. Burton herſelf, who, at ſuch a moment as this, when the life of a man, of your own nephew, is perhaps in danger, that could harbour the unnatural idea that any one ſhould think of ſelf?

Good Heaven, my dear couſin, replied Mrs. Burton, are we not perfectly certain that there are perſons who ſeldom think of any thing elſe? Yes, without a doubt, ſaid Mr. Prior, and I cannot conceive why Madame de Sorcy can yet have a doubt remaining on that point. This diſcourſe, which Mrs. Burton had ſufficient penetration to appreciate, very much offended her, and ſhe was on the point of replying to it, as if ſhe had taken it, when by a happy preſence of mind, ſhe felt, that to be angry, would immediately ſhew in what manner ſhe applied it, and unwilling that any one ſhould have the ſlighteſt idea that ſhe even underſtood

ſuch

[redacted] insinuations, she replied, with [redacted] mildness; it appears, my dear Mal[redacted] as if I had been unjust; but when [redacted] for more reason than any other [redacted] to be uneasy, as it is impossible [redacted] she [redacted] can love my nephew equal [redacted] herself; it appeared rather strange to [redacted] that you should dictate what I ought [redacted] and then tax me with calmness and [redacted] justice, for a refusal which was only [redacted] by humanity!—Humanity! cried [redacted] with astonishment. 'Certainly, [redacted] Mrs. Burton, for I have no [redacted] to sacrifice several persons for the [redacted] of one. It was, therefore, from a [redacted] of duty alone that I gave up the [redacted] ungovernable desire of sending my [redacted] to seek for Sir Edmond. And [redacted] me, my dear Malvina, that not [redacted] should have prevented my do[redacted], but that I felt it would not be [redacted] justly.

Mrs. Burton, however, had not once thought of any one of these particulars 'till the idea had been given by another which, to adopt, was a proof that Malvina was more affected than herself; and this was the true reason why Mrs. Burton would not give her consent.

It was very late when the company separated. Malvina, when alone, became a prey to the most painful solicitude.—She sent Mrs. Tomkins to bed, and remained by the fire—anxiety kept her awake; and agitation prevented her from amusing herself. Terrified at the violence of the wind, which made her casements rattle, she arose and went to the window, and found that it still snowed. She imagined that it must at least be two feet deep, and that Sir Edmond might be buried in it where it drifted. The torrents, which murmured from a distance, seemed to her like the cries of distress;

diſtreſs: ſhe wept, and prayed for his ſafety.

Malvina had been ſo much uſed to anxiety, and ſhe knew ſo little how to be otherwiſe, that though, on this occaſion, ſhe experienced an extreme degree of ſolicitude, ſhe was ſo far from attributing it to the real cauſe, that ſhe had not the idea, but that ſhe ſhould have felt juſt in the ſame manner for any other perſon; and that Sir Edmond, in particular, had no ſhare in her anxiety, more than the natural degree which all thoſe in affliction inſpired. There are ſome minds which are ſo ſuſceptible of humanity, that it evinces itſelf as plainly as the moſt powerful emotions of affection. It was near an hour after day-break, that Malvina, exhauſted by fatigue, had thrown herſelf upon a ſopha, and a light ſleep had juſt cloſed her eye-lids, when ſhe was diſturbed by the gate-bell reſounding through the caſtle: ſhe im-

mediately got up, and left her room to look out of the casement which fronted the court; and the first person she saw was Sir Edmond, covered with snow, surrounded by the servants, who, as they advanced, seemed to question him with earnestness and affection.

She hurried back to her chamber; and with tears, thanked Heaven for his safe return. A short time after, she heard a general stir in the house; and, amidst the confusion of voices, she could distinguish those of Mrs. Burton, Mr. Prior, and Miss Melmor. She wished, though she felt a disagreeable sensation at the idea of going down. She recollected the solicitude she had manifested; and it made her blush at the idea of appearing before so many witnesses of it. Besides, she feared Mrs. Melmor, and her daughter might inform Sir Edmond of all she had suffered; and though she did not allow there was any thing uncommon in what she

he had felt, perhaps Sir Edmond, whose ideas were not so delicate, might think differently. She had been told that he was presumptuous; and such a character very likely would treat such feelings with contempt.

While she was reflecting thus, her door was suddenly opened, and Sir Edmond appeared before her; his cloaths wet and disordered, his face pale, and his whole appearance evinced fatigue; except his eyes, which were brilliant, and animated with all that hope, and the most lively tenderness could express. Ah, madam! cried he, may I really hope they have not deceived me. Is it true that you have been interested in what became of me? That your generous mind condescended to think of me? That hope, had I dared to imagine it, would have made me forget all my difficulties, and have even rendered them pleasing. Ah, do not refuse to confirm it? Let me but

hear from your lips, that I [illegible] present in your thoughts, and the ob[illegible] of your pity?

In pronouncing these words, he [illegible] taken the hand of Malvina, and fixed eyes on her's, with an ardour and ten[illegible] solicitude, which made her blush. S[illegible] felt surprised, and confused; and hes[illegible] ingly replied: certainly I have been u[illegible] der some anxiety; but who is there w[illegible] has not felt the same? The night [illegible] been so tremendous, and you walked fast, that we feared that ——. Sir E[illegible] mond! cried Miss Melmor, as she ca[illegible] in half breathless, I am tired with follo[illegible] ing you; and there was not the least n[illegible] cessity for your saying much, to che[illegible] Madame de Sorcy's spirits.

Has she been pathetic in the rehital [illegible] her uneasiness? But, God bless me, a[illegible] ded she, observing Malvina's bed had n[illegible] been occupied—I believe she has not [illegible] be[illegible]

been in bed. Really, I could have done no more. But, good Heaven! my dear madam, how you are altered; your eyes are quite heavy and dull; you do not look like yourſelf. Ah! cried Sir Edmond, tranſported, and looking at Malvina with a tenderneſs he could not conceal, he thought that ſhe had never appeared ſo beautiful. Malvina, all confuſion, ſtammered out a few ſentences, ſaying, her anxiety had not been particular; and that it had been exaggerated.

Miſs Melmor, piqued at the preference which Sir Edmond evinced for Malvina, endeavoured to revenge herſelf, by rallying her in the ſevereſt manner. She tried to imitate her pleaſing voice; and, with ſome delicacy, threw a vein of ridicule into her diſcourſe, in order to render herſelf more amiable in the eyes of her lover; and, perhaps, ſhe might have ſucceeded, if the hope of being loved by Malvina had not, for the pre-

ſent, abſorbed all the faculties of Sir Edmond. He interpreted her embarraſſment, which became every moment more viſible; and her bluſhes created the moſt delightful ſenſations. With true affection, delicacy glides into the heart, and it does not wiſh to receive one pleaſure at the price of creating a pain to thoſe we love. He therefore endeavoured to conceal the joy he felt, and haſtened from her, without appearing to remark her agitation, intreating her to pardon the liberty he had taken of ſo abruptly entering her room.

For ſome days Miſs Melmor took a malicious pleaſure in teazing Malvina, by continually recurring to the ſame ſubject; but Sir Edmond always changed the diſcourſe, with ſo much delicacy, that Malvina could not avoid remarking that in that point, he perfectly coincided with her. One day, when the ſame ſubject had been again reſumed, and chance had left

them

hem alone in the drawing-room, Malvina eized the opportunity, when freed from heir raillery, to aſk a few queſtions concerning that day's encounter; and if he had really walked all the way there and back? Yes, replied, Sir Edmond; the ſnow and the tempeſt increaſing, prevented my reaching the caſtle 'till morning; and I continued walking all the time, as I had loſt my path. I ſacrificed the pleaſure of remaining with you, to that of helping a poor old man; but I would have riſqued my life to have returned a moment ſooner.

This was not ſaid with the air of a compliment; neither was it meant as one.—Sir Edmond felt what he ſaid: yet, the recollection of Miſs Melmor, preſerved Malvina from believing him; and ſhe ighed at the idea of his regarding her in he ſame light as other women; which ſhe ould not but think, from his addreſſing ich unmeaning and ready compliments to her,

her, which she had heard him often recite. The sigh did not pass unnoticed by Edmond; he looked at Malvina with anxious tenderness, and endeavoured to develope her silence. What is it that absorbs your thoughts? enquired Sir Edmond. Ah! if I could but read your heart. You would have nothing to read in it but mourning and sorrow, replied Malvina; for the more I know of the world, the more severely I feel the loss which I have sustained.

My beloved friend possessed a soul where purity and candor resided; I might say, with truth, all the virtues had taken refuge there; for she was a living temple of goodness.—And in losing her like Eve, in Milton, I am chased from Eden, and feel as if I was disenchanted by painful comparisons. Ah, replied Sir Edmond, with emotion, are you then ignorant that there is another Eden, besides friendship? and infinitely more de-

lightful,

lightful, more enchanting—as much above it as happineſs is ſuperior to repoſe. If I could believe it, I ſhould not be the happier, ſince I have vowed never to reſign myſelf to it.

. . . . . .

Ah! and can you think yourſelf bound by a vow which nature revolts at? aſked Sir Edmond. You was wrong in making it, and will be ſtill more culpable in keeping it. I break it, replied Malvina, it is a ſubject on which I do not know how to jeſt; and therefore it is too ſerious for you. And do you imagine I cannot be ſerious ſometimes, madam? You are certainly the beſt judge of that, Sir Edmond, replied Malvina, ſmiling; and I will not diſpute it with you.

If it is ſo, added ſhe, I ought to congratulate Miſs Melmor. Miſs Melmor! interrupted he, aſtoniſhed; why, Miſs Melmor?

Melmor? What concern is it of her's? I do not think that I need to inform you of that. I see, madam, replied he, gravely, that I have been slandered by some one. Slandered! Sir Edmond! What! in supposing that you was very naturally attracted by the graces of a charming young lady. I think it has rather all the appearance of truth! Without wishing to derogate from any charms which Miss Melmor may possess, madam, I must say, that if during my residence here, if she had been capable of fixing me, I should have appeared contemptible indeed, in my own opinion. I in love with Miss Melmor! Oh, Heavens! my heart revolts at such an accusation.

However that may be, added Malvina, I believe you are the only one who doubt it. I should be very sorry if Miss Melmor believed it, madam; though infinitely more so, if I thought you really did.

did. But I ask, if it was yourself who remarked the inclination which you suppose I have for her? No, sir; and I believe I should not have thought of it, if every body had not mentioned it. And this every body is, madam ——; but very seldom with those whom you see.

As to that, added she, it is of little consequence; I only wonder why you should deny it, as if it was a crime, so very natural a sentiment.

Miss Melmor is pretty and amiable; her character is gay and lively, like your own. Yes, madam, interrupted Sir Edmond, I know that I am often reproached with being so, even to folly; but, believe me, I possess a mind capable of being otherwise. And this was exactly the reason, though unknown to Malvina, which had insensibly subdued her. While she thought that she had nothing to fear, in that respect, from Sir Edmond, as their dispositions,

diſpoſitions were ſo very oppoſite; ſhe had not foreſeen that there are attractions for a ſenſible woman, in a mind naturally gay, when ſhe is conſcious that ſhe can render it ſerious; and, from being a flighty character, teach him to be a ſteady one.

The turn which this converſation occaſioned, began rather to embarraſs Malvina. The reſt of the evening ſhe was thoughtful and abſorbed, and continued the ſame during the next day. The remembrance of her friend, though ever preſent, had loſt that poignancy in the grief ſhe felt; and though always indulging the ſame ſentiment of friendſhip, ſhe now found herſelf more agitated, particularly when ſhe thought of Sir Edmond, which ſhe more frequently did, though ſhe did not yet ſuſpect her own heart of ſo great a preference. She did not perceive, that when the mind has been deeply affected by

by ſorrow, it is more liable to imbibe an evil, which will cauſe it infinitely more pain than what it has already experienced. That at the very moment when it ought to be reſiſted, it is already too late.

How could Malvina develope the cauſe of the enchantment, of which ſhe found herſelf ſuſceptible? not from experience, for ſhe had not any from friendſhip. Lady Sheridan no longer exiſted; and Mr. Prior could not replace her. He was not, nor ever could be, that ſecond ſelf, which that lady had been. Beſides, in her ſituation, the friendſhip of men generally appeared to be influenced by intereſted motives. They did not poſſeſs that delicacy of feeling and ſenſibility, which gently forces a friend to tell what ſhe wiſhes to diſcloſe; which can penetrate into thoſe feelings, delicacy does not wiſh to acknowledge, and ſym-

pathiſe,

pathiſe with that ſenſibility, without cauſing it to bluſh.

Mr. Prior had never imagined it was poſſible for Malvina to have a regard for Sir Edmond, their characters were ſo perfectly oppoſite; that the more he endeavoured to develope them, the greater he found the diſſimilarity. One was ſo conſtant; the other ſo changeable. The one treated with ſo much frivolity, what the other regarded as ſacred. Sir Edmond wiſhed only for pleaſure; Malvina required only affection. The gratification of the moment was quite ſufficient for the firſt; but a whole life would be ſcarcely enough for the conſtancy and delicate ſenſibility of her heart. Where there is not the leaſt congeniality of mind, can ſhe feel an attraction, and love one whom ſhe really does not underſtand? Thus thought Mr. Prior.

But he was not ſenſible, that if love is the offſpring of ſympathy, it is alſo the child of contraſt. That ſometimes they are united, by the moſt indiſſoluble ties; while thoſe who appear by nature to be formed for each other, never meet.

END OF VOL. I.

B. Reynell, Printer, 21, Piccadilly.

MALVINA,

BY

*MADAME C****,*

UTHORESS OF CLARE D'ALBE, AND AMELIA MANSFIELD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MISS GUNNING,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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H. Reynell, Printer, 21, Piccadilly.

1803.

MALWINA.

CHAP. I

THE INTRIGUE UNDERSTOOD.

IT was very ſeldom that Sir Edmond had the opportunity of being alone with Malvina; who, though ſhe did not ſeclude herſelf ſo much as ſhe had done, yet continued to conſecrate part of each day to the education of Frances; and whenever ſhe went down, ſhe generally found Mrs. Burton or Miſs Melmor in the ſaloon. An indifferent perſon was ſufficient to throw a reſtraint over her, conſequently, the preſence of

ſuch intereſted obſervers, muſt
rendered it diſagreeably irkſome.
reſtleſs ambition of Mrs. Burton, an
ſcrutiniſing jealouſy of Miſs Mel
who was continually watching the
tions of Sir Edmond, and malicic
interpreting thoſe of Malvina, if ſhe
ſeated by chance near the object of
wiſhes. One look from Mrs. Bu
created a bluſh on the cheek of Malv
if Sir Edmond ſeized an opportunit
converſing with her, Miſs Melmor in
diately bent forward to hear the repl

As Malvina did not ſay any thing
ſhe did not wiſh every one to hear, it
of little importance to her what
Melmor heard. Malvina, without
penetrating into the motive which
duced her to wiſh to go down,
earlier every day and retired later:
never particularly avoided being a
with Sir Edmond, yet when it happe
which was very ſeldom, they conve

the ſame as when they had witneſſes preſent; only we may ſuppoſe there might have been a different expreſſion, and a more lively intereſt betrayed.

When alone with thoſe we love, the thoughts may ſometimes be gueſſed, without revealing the ſecret. But the ſame countenance will endeavour to conceal that expreſſion before a third perſon, and therefore, the preſence of thoſe who have particular reaſons for remarking the actions of others (in ſuch inſtances) are generally dreaded. Sir Edmond was however not a little impatient, under the ſevere reſtraint which he was obliged to undergo before Mrs. Burton, and the teazing watchfulneſs which he continually ſuffered from Miſs Melmor; his haughty ſpirit being little accuſtomed to contradiction: it was at this time particularly painful, as it regarded a woman who intereſted him, and the being compelled to diſguiſe his partiality for Mal-

vina, became every day more insupportable; and he resolved to rid himself, at least, of that witness which he was conscious was the most dangerous.

As his sole intention was to gain Malvina's affection, in order to succeed, the most essential step would be, to lose sight of Miss Melmor, whom he knew he had injured, without considering or feeling the least concern for what might ensue from it; or from the anger of Mrs. Burton, who would have only him to reproach. He had observed that the passion he had pretended for Miss Melmor, in the defence of Malvina, when Mrs. Burton was present, had not had the desired effect on his aunt, and therefore not obtained the success he had promised himself; he thought he must devise some other stratagem, in order to accomplish his wishes.

His behaviour had caused Miss Melmor to assume a haughtiness and freedom

in her words and actions, which a perſon of Mrs. Burton's overbearing diſpoſition, would not long ſupport; while ſhe, proud of the attentions of Sir Edmond, not doubting but that he would marry her, followed his advice, which was never to acquieſce with Mrs. Burton in any of her capricious whims, as ſhe had been accuſtomed to do. She conſequently treated her with all the haughtineſs of a perſon who was confident of ſucceſs.

Mrs. Burton muſt have been perfectly metamorphoſed, if ſhe could have ſubmitted to this arrogant treatment: Miſs Melmor's humiliation or removal was therefore neceſſary to her exiſtence. She did not particularly fear that Sir Edmond would marry her; but ſhe clearly perceived that was expected, and the pride which this idea had created, was become inſupportable; ſhe therefore

reſolved to put an end to this pass
ing.

By the promiſe of a tolerable for
ſhe ſoon found a huſband, which
thought more eligible for her ward.
deſired Mrs. Melmor's attendance, a
had ſomething particular to communi
to her. This requeſt was immedia
complied with; and ſhe abruptly decl
in the preſence of Sir Edmond, that
deſired Mrs. Melmor would immedia
obtain the conſent of her daughter
marriage ſhe ſhould propoſe; and if
refuſed to comply, they muſt b
of them inſtantly quit the houſe.
Edmond, though he hoped to reap
advantage of his ſcheme, yet did
expect the accompliſhment of it ſo
He was, in conſequence, ſo agreeably
priſed at Mrs. Burton's declaration,
he affected a concern, which he pretend
to hide by covering his face with
ha

hand; but ſecretly to conceal the joy it had occaſioned.

As to Mrs. Melmor, her daughter had aſſured her that ſhe ſhould become Lady Burton, as Sir Edmond had promiſed to marry her: with this idea, on hearing Mrs. Burton's propoſal, ſhe remained as if petrified, 'till recollecting Sir Edmond was in the room, ſhe fixed her looks on him, and her aſtoniſhment increaſed on marking his ſilence. The angry diſcontent which Mrs. Burton expreſſed in her countenance, united with the menace ſhe had juſt uttered, ſeemed to have annihilated the ſmall portion of ſenſe with which nature had endowed her, without offering a reply, as her tongue appeared chained by fear.

Her friend was ſo little accuſtomed to find her heſitate whenever ſhe ſpoke to her, that ſhe repeated her commands with more ſeverity. When Mrs. Melmor en-

deavoured to anſwer, and ſtammeringly ſaid, I thought my dear Mrs. Burton, that is I ſuppoſed, in reality, I had imagined, that you had deſtined my daughter for Sir Edmond.

How Miſs Melmor could have the ridiculous vanity to ſuch a pretenſion, replied Mrs. Burton, diſdainfully, is what I am really at a loſs to conceive; but it is ſtill more ſtrange, that ſhe ſhould have ſucceeded in making you a partner in her folly.—Sir Edmond is here, and if it had been any thing more than an idle fancy of her own, he would explain himſelf; it was for that reaſon that I have ſpoken to you when he was preſent: but, I think I may venture to aſſure you, that he will never renounce the advantageous union which awaits him, for the caprice of a day: for if he ſhould, neither himſelf or your daughter will have any thing to expect from me.

On

On any other occaſion, Sir Edmond would have revolted at ſuch a threat, but the advantage which he ſhould gain by pretending to acquieſce in the views of Mrs. Burton, coincided but too well with his ſecret wiſhes; he therefore formally renounced all pretenſion to the heart of Miſs Melmor. Why then did you tell my daughter that you would marry her? ſaid Mrs Melmor, in a paſſion —why deſire her to viſit in your own apartment—was it to abandon her after having ſeduced her?

Sir Edmond was confounded on finding Mrs. Melmor acquainted with all the affair; and thus expoſing her daughter's ſhame ſo publicly. Mrs. Burton immediately demanded, with much indignation, what was meant by ſuch an accuſation, and if it was really poſſible he could have the audacity to prophane her houſe in ſuch a manner; and render it an aſylum for his intrigues?

No, no, replied Mrs. Melmor, my daughter has not any thing to reproach herſelf with, that I am certain, for ſhe told me ſo. But I cannot help blaming Sir Edmond for having enticed her to his apartment, that they might conſult together on the preparations for their marriage, before he had obtained your permiſſion to marry her. Do you not think I alſo have reaſon to blame him, ſaid Mrs. Burton. You are convinced that your daughter has had the imprudence to viſit Sir Edmond alone, and yet do not believe ſhe is loſt, diſhonored, and unworthy to breathe the ſame air with me? elevating her voice at every word ſhe uttered. Ah! good God, my dear friend, ſaid Mrs. Melmor trembling; I aſſure you that you terrify me, indeed you do. Yet permit me to ſay, that if every perſon was ruined by being in the room alone with a gentleman, I do not know what we are to think of Madame de Sorcy.

At these words, Sir Edmond was so violently agitated, that it prevented him from speaking: when Mrs. Burton said, with quickness, in the name of Heaven! explain yourself; what has passed there? Is it possible that my cousin, one of my companions, under my eyes, she who possesses such an air of innocence. No, it is not possible, I cannot believe it! I do not directly assert, returned Mrs. Melvin, that Madame de Sorcy is in the least guilty; but it is certain that every morning Mr. Prion goes up to her room, where he stays at least two hours; and they appear to be very agreeable to each other. He is not so haughty when with her, I suppose the gentleness which is so conspicuous in her behaviour, will render him less severe. We know there is nothing to fear in still water; and I should not be surprised if her fine sentiments had alienated the heart of Sir Edmond from my daughter.—But Heaven is just, and I hope I shall live long

enough to ſee her uſed in the ſame manner.

Mrs. Burton continued ſilent ſome moments, then ſighing deeply, ſhe exclaimed, it is really a truth then, that a virtuous example has not any influence; I had imagined that in my preſence, vice and indecency would have bluſhed; and that I ſhould have inſpired the love of wiſdom and morality. But I obſerve with ſorrow, that there is no defence againſt general corruption; and that there is not any, unleſs I ſpeak for myſelf, that I can believe is really virtuous.

Sir Edmond, who cared very little for Mrs. Burton's perfection, had waited with the utmoſt impatience for the concluſion of her ſpeech, to enquire of Mrs. Melmor, what was the motive of Mr. Prior's viſits every day to Madame de Sorcy's apartment? He pretends, ſhe replied, that it is to give her ſome leſſons in

God knows what; for my part, I do not know what paſſes between them: I am good myſelf, and God preſerve me from ſpeaking ill of any one. So it appears, replied Sir Edmond, with agitation; and if it was ſo, you would not form ſuch wretched motives; have dared to attack the reputation of Madame de Sorcy. Though this was ſaid with an aſſumed indifference, his heart was torn with jealouſy: for it is the misfortune of thoſe men who have been moſt converſant with the vicious and depraved part of the ſex, to have the leaſt reliance on their virtue.

But, though he could not prevent himſelf from being uneaſy at Malvina's intimacy with Mr. Prior, yet, the idea that any other ſhould have the leaſt doubt of her, was inſupportable to him. Mrs. Euſton was aſtoniſhed at the vehemence with which he expreſſed himſelf on the occaſion; and ſaid, I do not know, Edmond, why you ſhould ſpeak ſo highly

of

of Madame de Sercy's wisdom? the knowledge that at her age, and after Mr. Prior's function, renders her much more excusable than Miss Melmor, yet she is censurable in having such appearances against her; and I shall take care to inform her, that I think so. As for your daughter, my dear, said she, turning to Mrs. Melmor, I shall, from the regard I have for you, and the long friendship which has united us, never divulge this shameful affair; but she must on this condition, consent to obey me without hesitation, or she will have to repent all the days of her life.

Mrs. Melmor assured her friend in the most submissive manner of her daughter's perfect obedience. And Sir Edmond, fearful (and with reason), of Miss Melmor's reproaches whenever he met her, determined to leave the castle as soon as possible; and immediately told Mrs. Burton, that in consequence of

what

was laid happily, and to avoid the re-
gret on both sides, he would absent him-
self till the ceremony was performed.
Mr. Burton was however not to be so
easily deceived by the air of affected for-
row, which he assumed as he pronounced
these words.

She looked at him with an expression
of inquiry, but she was so rejoiced
at the idea of his departure, that she was
regardless of the motive from which it
proceeded. It was therefore agreed be-
tween them, that not any thing of the
above should transpire to Miss Melmoth,
till after his departure, which was fixed
for the next day.

He retired to his chamber a prey to
the most painful sensations. Malvina's
intimacy with Mr. Prior was insupport-
able to him. He wished to penetrate in-
to the cause, as well as the effects. He
could only judge by the pleasure he ex-

perienced

perienced in the company of Malv
not that he had an idea of any thing
proper, with regard to her; but
slightest expression of her esteem for
other, he considered as an unpardon
deprivation, which seemed to de
him of his right. He wished to be
sole object of her thoughts, and that
heart should alone feel for him. a
would have been jealous of Lady S
dan, had she been living. He would
sacrificed his life to have penetrated
vina's private sentiments.—Neverthe
from an inherent pride, which wa
creased by the conquest of so many
men; for the moment he was in doul
the affection of a woman, he disdaine
stoop for it, or acknowledge an att
ment, without he was conscious o
being reciprocal: however jealousy m
torment him, it would never force hi
complain; and if it sometimes pierce
bosom, it was involuntary—against
inclination, and only in those mom

when nature proved more powerful than vanity.

Certainly the ſentiments which Malvina inſpired, bore not the leaſt reſemblance to any thing he had ever experienced; but all powerful as it was, he would never have made the ſlighteſt confeſſion of his affection, if he had not read in her eyes, that what he uttered did not offend her. He therefore waited, though impatiently, for the moment which might elucidate this; when Mrs. Melmor put a ſtop to this overflow of tenderneſs, and he determined not to open his heart, before he was convinced if her accuſation had any foundation. And if he found it confirmed, that any other could for a moment leave a doubt of preference in the heart of Malvina; he reſolved to forget her.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE EVE OF A DEPARTURE.

IN the evening, as th
all sitting at the tea table, Mrs.
occupied by the pleasure of h
Miss Melmor, by the marriage she
ed: at the same time she wa
uneasy on Malvina's account,
bious in what manner to act with
to her. Mrs. Melmor was endea
to recollect something that migh
her more than dwelling

ager of Mrs. Burton, and the fear of her daughter's disappointment; and she was supposed to be in deep reflection, because she was silent.

Sir Edmond was thoughtful and melancholy, leaning with his elbow against the chimney-piece, as he held a newspaper in his hand, which he was pretending to read, though entirely absorbed by his affection for Malvina, yet unhappy at the idea of leaving her—and the fear of not possessing her heart. On the opposite side of the table, was seated Malvina, by her little girl, shewing her some prints, and explaining the different subjects to her. Miss Melmor was with much negligence looking over Frances's shoulder at times, and Mr. Prior pacing the room, absorbed in reflection.

This silence was interrupted by Miss Burton, who being the youngest, drew to the table to make the tea. When she

ſhe had offered it round, Malvina was holding the cup in her hand, Mrs. Burton addreſſing Sir Edmond, ſaid, you do not mean to go 'till after breakfaſt to-morrow, I ſuppoſe? He bowed. Where are you going then, aſked Miſs Melmor, with quickneſs? Some very particular buſineſs requires my attendance in Edinburgh. Oh, mama, you have ſcalded me, cried little Frances, with tears in her eyes; and ſhaking the tea from her fingers. Malvina was vexed at ſpilling the tea on the child.

Will you make a long ſtay there, enquired Miſs Melmor? with viſible vexation. Yes, replied Sir Edmond, fixing his eyes on Malvina, I am not certain whether I ſhall not be obliged to go to England. On hearing this, Malvina turned pale, and ſhe felt her heart flutter. Sir Edmond had marked all theſe emotions, he went to her under pretence of taking her cup, and touching her hand,

hand, he felt it cold and moiſt. Such a ſudden and lively ſenſation in an inſtant, removed all his doubts. He was perfectly convinced that he was beloved—he ſeated himſelf by her, and was ſincerely grateful in poſſeſſing the affections of ſo lovely a woman.

Malvina, who was overpowered by the moſt melancholy ſenſations, continued ſilent, and did not even imagine that ſhe was obſerved. The idea of his departure, which ſhe had never heard mentioned, gave her a ſudden ſhock, which awakened a thouſand painful ideas, and which as they ſucceeded each with rapidity, ſhe was fearful of inveſtigating, and wiſhed to remain in doubt; but ſhe could no longer conceal it from herſelf. The more wretched her heart felt, the ſtronger was her conviction. It is when the mind is overſhadowed by ſorrow, that certain truths, like a flaſh of lightning, darts from the darkneſs, and throws a gleam

a gleam of light on ſome obſcure point, which like this flaſh, ſtrikes conviction to the heart. Oh! fatal light—unpardonable weakneſs—Oh! my dear Frances. Such were the mental ſpontaneous expreſſions of Malvina, and the firſt time ſhe had felt the fatal preſentiment: and on repeating the laſt, ſhe eagerly preſſed Frances to her boſom, as if to prevent the intruſion of any other ſentiment.

Sir Edmond eaſily penetrated into the cauſe of this laſt action; which ſerved to increaſe his affection, as it made him more vain at the idea of conquering in ſuch a heart, the remembrance of a friend, the conſcientious ſcruples of a vow, and a ſentiment of duty. This mute ſcene had not laſted above a minute; but it was one of thoſe critical minutes of exiſtence, when theſe agitated ſenſations pour like a torrent on the mind and mark its future courſe, and which has given life to the embryo paſſion

was enclosed in the bosom, and lay dormant, 'till this critical moment informed us that we possessed that, which alone decides our present and future destiny, while they glide unperceived by others, like a passing cloud.

Thus, while Malvina in idea had ranged so great a space, Miss Melmor had remained immoveable with attentiveness, on hearing Sir Edmond's reply. To England, she at last exclaimed, what can be the business which calls you so unexpectedly to so great a distance? Sir Edmond is not accountable to you for his actions, Kitty, said Mrs. Burton, imperiously—why am I always obliged to reprimand you for the rudeness of your questions? Whatever may be the motives which have determined me, replied Sir Edmond, to this journey, they ought to be very powerful, since they force me to leave this place and the most amiable society, which would be an inducement for my stay; and also

to

to make me wiſh a quick return. Edmond, haſtily interrupted Mrs. ton (who feared that both Malvina Miſs Melmor might each of them the compliment). To prevent you dwelling on what we ſhall mutually at parting, would it not be better amuſe ourſelves with a little muſic?

Moſt willingly, replied Sir Edm with eagerneſs, in the hope that in g from the ſaloon to the muſic-room, might find an opportunity of ſpeaking Malvina. You muſt not depend on ſinging, ſaid Miſs Melmor, with vexati for I am not at all diſpoſed. We diſpenſe with that, replied Mrs. Bu in the ſame tone. Mrs. Melmor ſaw that her friend was diſpleaſed, a motion to her daughter, to inform there was a particular reaſon for thi haviour; but that ſhe need not herſelf uneaſy, as ſhe would ſoon be formed of it. Dear aunt, ſaid Sir mond,

mond, will you be ſo good as to let us have that new ſelection of French ſongs which you received this morning?—Seeing that ſhe heſitated, he added, in a whiſper, becauſe if they are pretty, I ſhall intreat you will permit me to preſent them to Lady Mary. Mrs. Burton went immediately to fetch them. For ever this deteſtable French, ſaid Miſs Melmor, riſing from her ſeat with ill humour. Sir Edmond approached her, and looking tenderly at her, as they were at a diſtance from the reſt of the company, ſaid, in a manner which could only be underſtood by her—Of what conſequence is all this to you; cannot you remain here alone? I ſhall ſoon return. Miſs Melmor imagined ſhe underſtood his meaning, and, re-ſeating herſelf, declared ſhe would not go with the others. Mrs. Melmor thought by following her example, to ſatisfy her daughter's curioſity, ſaying, ſhe did not fancy muſic. Sir Edmond was delighted to get quit of both of them; and taking

Malvina's silence for consent, he presented his hand to lead her to the music-room, but being not the least disposed to sing, and Tomkins just then entering, to take Frances to bed, she rose up to follow the child. Sir Edmond, perceiving her intention, endeavoured to detain her; she had no sooner stood up, than she felt a tremor all over her, and seemed near falling; she caught hold of Sir Edmond's arm to sustain herself. He immediately guessed the cause of this agitation; determined not to give her time to deny him, and taking advantage of her weakness, lead her to the music-room. Frances, on finding her mother did not follow her, as she thought she meant to have done, began to cry from the disappointment. Malvina instantly turned to yield to her intreaties, when Sir Edmond, turning to Mr. Prior, who was following them, said, as he gave him a paper of sweetmeats, dear sir, will you endeavour to appease that dear child with these sweetmeats,

sweetmeats, as I am positive you will succeed best, for Frances loves you tenderly, and you are the only person here who can console her in the absence of her mother.

Mr. Prior was flattered by a compliment which he thought might render him more agreeable to Malvina, immediately went back, and taking Frances in his arms, carried her up stairs. By this stratagem, Sir Edmond was alone wih Malvina in the music-room. He prevailed on her to place herself at the piano, which she did mechanically; but, from the confusion of her thoughts, she could not distinguish a note. Sir Edmond opened the part of Armida, which is the duet at the conclusion; and fixing his eyes on her, he sung this air in the most plaintive and tender manner. "Armida, I am going to leave you". These words, which were so applicable, and the tone in which they were expressed, so greatly augmented her

agitation, that all her efforts were vain and her tears betrayed what ſhe attempted to conceal. Sir Edmond, on obſerving this, ſeized her hand, and preſſed it to his lips with ardor, exclaiming as he held it, ah! is it really true? can it be poſſible that my departure is not indifferent to the moſt charming, the moſt adorable of women?—Ah! what a ſevere puniſhment ſhould I have conſidered it, had I left this place without having dared to expreſs all which you have inſpired. I have been a prey to the inſinuations of others; and poſſeſſing a character naturally ardent and impetuous, it occaſions inconſiſtencies which originate from the anxiety of a paſſionate heart, who only wiſhed to be convinced if its affection was returned.—Ah! was I not alſo to leave you with an amiable, virtuous, and worthy man, capable of appreciating all your merits, and who is permitted to viſit you every day alone. At theſe words, Malvina looked at Sir Edmond with aſtoniſhment, and

the

then ſaid, have I done wrong in admitting Mr. Prior's viſits? You cannot do wrong, he replied, with vivacity; but you can give me infinite affliction. Ah! exclaimed ſhe, ſpontaneouſly from her heart, I do not wiſh to afflict *you*. Sir Edmond, delighted at the expreſſions which had eſcaped her, was juſt going to anſwer, when the entrance of Mr. Prior prevented him.

Malvina was ſo little accuſtomed to diſguiſe her emotions, that had ſhe attempted it, ſhe would not have ſucceeded, at leaſt not from the penetrating looks of Mr. Prior. But Sir Edmond was ſo well verſed in deceit of this nature, that it was become habitual; he therefore immediately changed the converſation, with ſo much eaſe and gaiety, that the moſt ſcrutinizing obſerver would never have diſcovered that the moment before he had been affected. Malvina made no reply to all the diſagreeable nothings which he ut-

tered; but kept turning over the lea
of the music book, and appeared to
looking for a song, without knowing w
she did. Mr. Prior seated himself op
site to her, and looking steadily at h
he immediately asked what had been
matter—why do you look so pale? T
question occasioned a blush. She
had so lately developed her own feelir
was fearful that every one else would
netrate them; and because she was ex
sively absorbed by one object, and i
gined the thoughts of every other
directed to the same subject; and
supposed it impossible but that they m
read in her eyes what she so poignan
felt in her heart.

Mr. Prior having waited in vain fo
reply, fancied Malvina had not heard h
and enquired a second time with grea
earnestness, why she was so changed, a
what had occasioned it? Malvina, t
questioned, hastily answered that she
perfe

perfectly well, and juſt as uſual: but as ſhe pronounced theſe words, a bluſh of the deepeſt ſhade dyed her countenance, for ſhe had uttered an untruth: ſhe told it Mr. Prior who ſhe regarded as a friend; and Sir Edmond, whom ſhe could not deceive by ſuch anſwer, ſhe included in the ſecret.

At this inſtant, Mrs. Burton returned, and Malvina appeared in haſte to begin the ſongs; but each perſon was abſorbed by their peculiar ideas; every one ſeemed at croſs purpoſes, and ſung without attention, while the reſt liſtened without pleaſure. They were on the point of concluding, when Mrs. Burton, in turning over the ſongs, and yawning at the ſame time, ſaid, I have found one, which was written by a woman. Mr. Prior taking it, told Malvina ſhe could not conclude without playing it, in compliment to her countrywoman. Sir Edmond ſmiled approbation, and placing the ſong before

her, ſhe began it, as ſhe would not deſ
him. The words were very trifling, ye
they made ſuch an impreſſion on Malvin
that her voice could ſcarcely be hear
Come, ſaid Mrs. Burton, I think you ha
better leave off, as I obſerve you are n
in a humour for muſic this evening, for
never heard you ſing ſo ill. A look tha
Sir Edmond informed Malvina that h
thought very differently, and ſtooping
forward as if to read the ſong, he ſaid, i
a low voice, which no one heard bu
Malvina, your ſinging this evening wa
delightful, as it gave the promiſe of ſu
preme felicity. I was going to leave yo
without hope; but one word, one look
can raiſe me to ecſtacy. Malvina's eye
were inſtantly caſt down, as ſhe was con
ſcious a look would have been an anſwer
but ſhe was ignorant that her ſilence wa
equally ſo—and Sir Edmond conſtrued i
as ſuch. On leaving the ſaloon, Malvina
overcome by the ſenſations ſhe felt, beg
ged her couſin's permiſſion to retire
whic

which was inſtantly granted. Ah! why will you leave us? demanded Sir Edmond, with vivacity. But, if you ſhould not come down to breakfaſt, will you permit me to pay my reſpects to you in your apartment? Malvina deſired he would not give himſelf that trouble, as ſhe certainly would go down in the morning.—She went up to her room, and walking haſtily backward and forward, ſhe trembled at the idea of inveſtigating her heart; and in the tumult which her agitation occaſioned, ſhe uttered this ſoliloquy:—

Happineſs is departing from me—Why am I ſo agitated? I tremble, and cannot connect my ideas—Why have I beheld a being who has ſuch a ſudden power over me?—Why is he the cauſe of ſuch poignant ſenſations?—Do I love? no, no; I think I do not, I am ſure of it; for do I not rather wiſh to avoid, than to ſee him? Depart, oh! depart, Edmond, and deliver me from thy ſight—I have beheld you

too long. Then pausing a moment continued—Is this a dream? Art not before me every moment? perha morrow. The voice of Frances re her ideas; and throwing herself b side of the bed, she exclaimed, ah! I not promised to consecrate my da this child?—Did not my beloved on her death bed, receive my vo Methinks, that from the seats of she looks down upon me; but, she know me in my present situatio Oh! thou guardian angel, fainted spirit, behold my tears, and have on me—Shield me from this weak Ah! it is certainly for my repose this dangerous being is going to leav I fancy I hear thy sweet voice, w warns me not to see him any more; I will obey it. She threw herself the bed, and in silent reflection, e voured to overcome her sorrow.

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CHAP. III.

AGITATIONS, CONFIDENCE, AND EXPLANATIONS.

THE next morning ſhe retained her reſolution, and did not go down: alſo to avoid Sir Edmond's viſit, ſhe ſent to inform them ſhe was indiſpoſed. He deferred his departure in vain for ſome hours, in the hope of ſeeing her; but as ſhe did not appear, he found he muſt reſolve to quit the houſe without again beholding her, who was become the arbiter of his deſtiny. This reſolve was not executed without pain, and he

was alſo hurt that Malvina had not
formed her promiſe; and ſtill more
that ſhe could reſiſt the opportunit
bidding adieu.

Malvina had not a doubt after
had been ſaid the evening before,
that he would have been tempted to
her, and all the morning her heart
in a conſtant flutter from this expe
tion: but the noiſe of the carriage roll
through the court, put an end to
expectation, and her hopes. She
cied perhaps, Sir Edmond had imagi
he would not have been admitted,
perhaps had left her a billet. She the
fore expected every time that Tomk
made her appearance, that ſhe came
preſent one; and her looks were
intelligent, that Tomkins enquired e
time if ſhe wanted any thing. At l
as the evening began to throw her du
ſhades on all around, ſhe could
longer doubt Sir Edmond had depar
witho

without thinking of her. A hopeleſs and gloomy anxiety took poſſeſſion of her ſoul; and notwithſtanding the duties which occupied her, ſhe could not prevent her thoughts from dwelling on him. And he who had no motive, had departed as if he had quite forgot her.

From this ſhe thought they muſt be very differently affected, for in his ſituation how differently would ſhe have acted. Thus thought Malvina: and this was the firſt proof which taught her, that a tender woman, who expects to receive as much attention as ſhe pays, and who judges of the heart of a man by her own, is in an error; and that dear-bought experience will ſooner or later convince her of it.

The indiſpoſition of which ſhe had complained in the morning, ſerved as an excuſe for her keeping her room all that day; and the fear of intruding, prevented Mr. Prior from going to viſit her. But what

what infinite pain was it to him to prevent himself from seeing her. One day passed without beholding Malvina was not a day but an age to him; nothing could compensate this loss; and to be he felt that even to breathe the same with her was a felicity. But how much more could a word or a look from a friend bestow. Yet he was not then alarmed at the consequences of his friendship.

The impossibility of his pretensions any other sentiment, precluded the idea of danger. His vows, his rank appeared to him an insurmountable barrier that not any power on earth could subdue. Thus he stood fearless, the tottering on the brink of a precipice little imagining that only a single step held him to Heaven, while an unfathomable abyss was at his feet. The idea of obtaining any thing beyond the friendship of Malvina, had never entered his imagination

imagination. But we may doubt whether he could have ſupported this by that reaſon, which is ever ſo watchful and quick ſighted, that its inveſtigation ſometimes creates fear.

It appears as if we might be dazzled by the idea of a happineſs, which is ſo great that it defies the weakneſs of our ſenſes, and yet our ſouls fear as much to reſt on the enjoyment of it, as our eyes do to gaze on the ſun. Mr. Prior, under the ſanction of his vows, looked forward to the next morning, when he ſhould ſee her with all the temerity of ſelf confidence. He roſe early and went to pay his viſit at the hour ſhe uſually came down ſtairs, but all was ſilent in her apartment, and he was obliged to return to his own. At laſt, after the clock had ſtruck twelve, as he paſſed for the ſeventh or eighth by her door, which he ſo much deſired to find open, he met Tomkins coming out, and he enquired if Madame

de

de Sorcy was up, and if he might go in? Ah, ſir, ſaid Tomkins, ſhe has been ever ſince it was light, up, walking her room; and the dear lady has ſlept ſo little, that I am ſure ſhe will make herſelf ill. For two nights ſhe has obliged me to go to bed, and God knows at what hour ſhe went herſelf; ſhe has never ceaſed weeping: what can have produced this change? Indeed my good ſir, if I am always to behold her thus, I can have no longer any pleaſure in life.

Mr. Prior made no reply, but went in to Malvina, ſhe was ſeated with her elbow reſting on her knee, and her hand before her face in a melancholy attitude. She aroſe the moment he entered, and came to meet him. He obſerved her eyelids were red and heavy. You are not well my friend, or elſe you are much afflicted. Will you not let me ſympathiſe in the ſorrow that oppreſſes your heart? It is true that I am a little indis-

poſed, replied Malvina, it was that cauſe which made me keep my room yeſterday, and not admit any one. Though I was fearful my conduct might appear rather extraordinary or unpolite.

Who could have thought ſo, ſaid Mr. Prior? Sir Edmond particularly, replied Malvina, but fearing this might be obſerved, ſhe ſtopped, without aſking a queſtion. I was very uneaſy all day, ſaid Mr. Prior, after a moments ſilence, but the fear of intruding, prevented my coming up. The day appeared to me tedious and very long, from not having ſeen you—But, dear madam, did you not pity your friend being deprived of your preſence? I believe I muſt open my heart to you, Mr. Prior, replied ſhe, certainly your friendſhip is very dear to me, and you muſt be conſcious of the pleaſure I derive from converſing with you; but do you not fear, that we may be liable to have

have falſe conſtruction impute
ſeeing each other ſo frequently?

Good God! exclaimed Mr.
looking at her with aſtoniſhment
can have given riſe to ſuch an e
dinary idea? But in the name of
replied Malvina, bluſhing, ſuch c
viſits in my apartment, was appa
ticular. But who can think ſo—w
marked it—who has told you ſo?
pointed queſtion rather diſconcerte
but as ſhe preferred naming Sir E
to telling an untruth, ſhe inſtantly i
ed him.

At the mention of Sir Edmon
Prior was ſtruck with aſtoniſhmen
immediately exclaimed, ah, what
has Sir Edmond to paſs any rema
your conduct. How dare he te
this, and from what intereſted mo
is that my friendſhip muſt be ſac
to ſuch a man as he is? The air

tempt with which the laſt ſentence was uttered, made Malvina recover herſelf, and ſhe haſtily replied, whatever may be the opinon of Sir Edmond in other reſpects, you do not I ſuppoſe, think him incapable of making a juſt remark? and I am conſidered guilty in having liſtened to it? But, replied Mr. Prior, ſuch kind of advice muſt ſuppoſe there exiſts an intimacy between him and you, which you have never mentioned to me.

I do not imagine it will any longer exiſt, replied ſhe with an air of confuſion. You do not believe it will, oh, Malvina! you are not then certain? What am I to imagine, what ought I to believe? Can this be the cauſe of your melancholy? Of the diſtreſs which I obſerve you in. Malvina you are ſilent, what a dreadful conviction has burſt on my ſoul. Oh, Malvina, dear and unhappy friend, take care of yourſelf! beware of this perfidious man: ever active and ingenious in every

every thing that can gratify or promote his wiſhes, he knows well in what manner to diſconcert the wiſeſt plans, and ſully the moſt unſullied virtue: for his [illegible] are like honey, whoſe melting ſweetneſs charm the ear, and touch the heart.

I now penetrate into the cauſe of his whimſical and myſterious conduct: he wiſhes to pleaſe and ſeduce your affections, without altogether relinquiſhing Miſs Melmor. As he knows when you are preſent, the others are merely non-entities; and when he cannot ſee Malvina, he can amuſe himſelf with Miſs Melmor. For though he has not evinced ſo much eagerneſs to be alone with her ſince he has beheld you, yet I have obſerved that when you are preſent, he always changes his behaviour; and in your abſence, ſhe was every thing to him, and he was ſo very particular and prodigal of his attentions, that they appeared paſſionate, even to adoration.

At theſe words, Malvina turned ſo pale, that Mr. Prior was alarmed. Oh my dear friend, ſaid he, after ſhe was a little recovered, do not imagine that the fear of loſing your friendſhip has occaſioned me to tranſgreſs the confines of truth, with regard to Sir Edmond; no, if he was not inconſtant, deceitful, and unworthy of poſſeſſing ſuch a heart as your's; if he was but formed to make you happy; or could he feel the excellency, or appreciate ſuch a character as your's, I would with pleaſure be the firſt to lead him to your feet, and offer my fervent prayers for your united happineſs, though you ſhould from that moment loſe the remembrance of ſuch a being as myſelf.

At this moment Mr. Prior was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Burton; the agitation which was viſible in Malvina, and the ſerious intereſting expreſſion of Mr. Prior's countenance, might have excited a ſuſpicion of ſomething particular in a common obſerver: what then muſt it have *produced, and* alſo confirm-

ed, in a mind so little inclined to judge favorably of any one. She stood silent for a moment, as if deprived of the power of utterance; then regarding them for some time longer, she at last exclaimed, I have been informed of this; but I disregarded the insinuation, and scorned to believe it; but I now see plainly that I have not been deceived.

And what have you been told, madam, interrupted Mr. Prior, with quickness? What suspicions have you dared to form? Suspicions, replied Mrs. Burton, disdainfully, are they not confirmed beyond a doubt—from the situation in which I observed you both: has it not convinced me of the subject that occupied you entirely? Take care, replied Mr. Prior, raising his voice, take care, madam, that you are not biassed by unworthy passions; for they pervert the judgment, veil the conscience; and the virtues of the heart are enveloped in darkness. Where have you

you learned so much presumption, Mr. Prior, replied Mrs. Burton, regarding him with a look of the utmost contempt; how long is it that you have been authorised to reprimand me? I likewise inform you, that I think it is quite sufficient if you answer for yourself: I do not imagine that you will pretend to answer for that lady.

With regard to myself, he replied, it is very immaterial, what judgment is formed of me by any one in this world; to God alone belongs this right. Heaven is my witness, and my support is from it alone. But as to that amiable creature, who by her sex, is liable to be hurt by the perverse and too often wrong judgments of men; if I have not the power of defending her against those who possess the sting of the serpent in their tongue, and from whose lips flow the poisonous exhalation of the viper—Yet, O God, thou will be her resource, and thou will deli-

ver

ver her from thoſe who meditate evil in their hearts.

Leave the room, ſir, exclaimed Mrs. Burton, pale and trembling with rage, unleſs you wiſh me to infer, that you have a greater right to remain here than I have? Notwithſtanding this threat, Mr. Prior, appeared undetermined whether he would go, and continuing in the room, evinced his unwillingneſs to obey her command. When, Malvina coming forward, with a gentle, though dignified calmneſs, which rectitude and virtue ever gives; ſaid, be kind enough to retire Mr, Prior, as you obſerve my couſin wiſhes to be alone with me; retire my friend, and do not make yourſelf the leaſt uneaſy, for ſuch reproaches do not deſerve to occaſion it, not even in the ſlighteſt degree.

Her manner perſuaded much more than her words, and it almoſt produced

the

the ſame effect on Mrs. Burton; though ſhe pretended to continue her ſuſpicions, yet in her heart, ſhe was convinced there was no reaſon for them. The conviction did not eſcape Mr. Prior, and gratified by Malvina's ſuperiority, he went out without ſpeaking.

Malvina immediately deſired an explanation of Mrs. Burton, of the ſtrange ideas ſhe entertained concerning herſelf and Mr. Prior. Her couſin, rather confuſed, ſaid, indeed my dear, you may be aſſured that I have never encouraged all the ſuſpicions which have been ſuggeſted to me concerning you, becauſe I could never be made to believe that a relation of my own could be guilty of an imprudence. At the word imprudence, Malvina's countenance was ſuffuſed with a bluſh of indignation, and interrupting Mrs. Burton, with a voice and air of aſtoniſhment, ſhe continued, whatever honor may devolve to

me from being related to you, mada
I ſhould indeed be degraded in my o
opinion if I did not know that I ha
right to the eſteem which I ought
receive from you. Let me then, mada
hear you particulariſe all the dou
which you have ſuppoſed; and alſo
deſire to be acquainted from whom th
have originated, that I may conf
them.

The words and manner of Malvi
ſerious and modeſt, poſſeſſed a pow
ſo forcible, that Mrs. Burton could
reſiſt its perſuaſion; and the truth
compelled to eſcape her, though
came with the intention of reject
every thing which could remove
doubts. She was forced to confeſs
Mrs. Melmor was the perſon who accu
her; and ſubdued by that ſuperio
which innocence gave Malvina, ſhe
that ſhe did not believe this ſland
and ſhould not have mentioned

l ſhe not thought that in future it
ght be a preventative for her giving
: ſlighteſt occaſion for the malicious
:erpretations of the world.

I never conſidered this caſtle as the
›rld, replied Malvina; or certainly I
ould have been more attentive to ap-
:arances. I had not an idea that I
.ould have been ſo ſeverely judged,
y perſons under your obſervation, and
› your houſe. We are never out of the
ach of evil ſpeakers, my dear, replied
:rs. Burton, and I am much deceived
the inſinuations of Mrs. Melmor has
›t prejudiced Sir Edmond againſt you;
id who can tell but that he may divert
imſelf with this tale, in the world, at
our expence.

Do you then ſuppoſe him capable of
uch behaviour, ſaid Malvina, bluſhing!
s to myſelf, whatever may be your
›pinion of him, I ſhould imagine that

he poſſeſſed too great a ſhare of ſenſi
than adopt the ſame ideas as your frien
and if he did, he ſurely muſt poſſeſs mo
honor than to expoſe them. Indeed, m
dear couſin, interrupted Mrs. Burton,
muſt inform you, that you judge muc
more favorably of him, than he does o
you; and allow me to ſay, that you mu
be particularly partial, to attempt ex
cuſing him on this occaſion. He wh
has dared to make my houſe the ſcene o
his debaucheries, and under my eyes
have an intrigue with a young girl whom
I protected.

Perhaps, interrupted Malvina, wit
quickneſs, Miſs Melmor has only bee
condemned from appearances—becauſ
ſhe may have been imprudent, ſhe i
believed criminal. Who has been he
accuſer? Her mother, replied Mrs
Burton, who, deceived by the artifice o
her daughter, believes ſhe may ye
be innocent. But, when convinced o

he

her frequent interviews with Sir Edmond, how is it poſſible to think as ſhe does. If he knew ſhe was thus accuſed, he certainly would vindicate her, replied Malvina, timidly.

It was in his preſence that I told Mrs. Melmor her daughter was ruined, and he never denied it. He did not deny it, replied Malvina, irritated—Then he at leaſt promiſed to make a reparation by marrying her whom he had ſeduced? If he had, he would have been [redacted] guilty than Miſs Melmor; and it would certainly only have encouraged vice, by rewarding that unworthy girl by a marriage ſo much above her hopes. If I am ſilent on this ſcandalous affair, it is chiefly from reſpect to myſelf, not from any ſentiment of pity ſhe has inſpired.

Thus it is, ſaid Malvina, ſhe will have merited your utmoſt contempt; yet, you retain your kindneſs to the man who

has ruined her? Young and inexperi
ced, ſhe did not foreſee that ſuch
fault would conſtitute her miſery
life; and the world will diſown and
card her; while her ſeducer, who pre
ditated her fall, and who glories in
diſhonor, will be received, careſſ
and diſtinguiſhed by every one.

You are an able advocate in the
half of guilty females, interrupted M
Burton. Rather ſay unfortunate, cr
Malvina. Well my dear couſin, repl
ſhe, with an ironical ſmile, whatever r
be the motives which induce you
generouſly to defend them, know, t
the one you plead for, though ſhe
not obtain the reward you wiſh h
will not be condemned to the diſgr
which ſhe merits: but, in a few days,
will be married. Marry any other t
Sir Edmond, and does he permit it?
will be rejoiced to find that ſuch a c
temptible conqueſt is placed out of

wi

way; as he is now gone to Edinburgh to facilitate his marriage with Lady Mary Summerhill; and it is my intention to join him very ſhortly, to aſſiſt at a union, which will place my nephew in one of the firſt ſtations in the kingdom, and will render him deſerving of the fortune I intend to leave him.

Malvina had received ſo many ſucceſſive ſhocks, that her heart was ſo overpowered by the various ſenſations they had occaſioned, that ſhe could make no reply. Mrs. Burton, who had marked her change of countenance, ſaid, I ſee this converſation has fatigued you; but before I leave you, I muſt inform you that I do not intend to keep Mr. Prior much longer in my houſe; though I am convinced there is not the leaſt reaſon to ſuſpect any thing in your intimacy with him; yet, the haughty inſolence which your friendſhip has made him aſſume, renders him unbearable; there-

fore, I think you will have no objectio to his departure. Me, madam, replie Malvina, aſtoniſhed, are you not entit miſtreſs here? Has any perſon a rigl to diſpute your will? But I believe, if did wiſh ſuch a thing, it would not be o this occaſion (recollecting that Mr. Pric had informed her at the beginning o their intimacy, that he only ſtaid wit Mrs. Burton per force). This anſwe appeared perfectly to ſatisfy her couſi and embracing her with every mark o ſincere reconciliation, ſhe left her.

CHAP. IV.

THE INTERIOR STATE OF EACH PERSON.

THE grief and aſtoniſhment which Malvina experienced from the conviction of Sir Edmond's intimacy with Miſs Melmor, will perhaps, appear rather ſurpriſing, when we conſider what ſhe had heard from Mr. Prior; not that ſhe had forgot the circumſtances with which he had acquainted her; but in fact, ſhe did not entirely believe them; and flattered herſelf that he might be miſinform-

ed, or judge erroneouſly; and conſequently unjuſt.

She had therefore never mentioned the ſubject ſince, as ſhe had placed an entire confidence in the tender and paſſionate behaviour of Sir Edmond towards herſelf. If it ſhould be thought reprehenſible, that Malvina ſhould have been ſo eaſily deluded by an attachment, which her reaſon muſt have condemned; the only extenuation which I can offer for this ſeeming paradox, is, that it has been generally remarked (without even excepting Clariſſa) that many women of the ſtricteſt virtue have a partiality for thoſe men who are of an ardent and paſſionate character.

Whether it originates from the latent hope of reforming their errors, and changing the activity of their paſſions, by leading them to the purſuits of virtue; or that the equity of nature requires the union

union of contrafts, that there may be no evil without a remedy, as there is alſo no good without its alloy. Such are the vanderings of the human heart. That of Malvina's followed the general rule, for though the world could produce but few women that would bear a compariſon with her, yet ſhe, even Malvina, was but a mortal.

It would be impoſſible to pourtray the melancholy reflections of Malvina. She vainly endeavoured to attribute them to the regret ſhe experienced, from having forgot her vow, and permitting theſe new ſentiments to uſurp its place. She endeavoured to gain force to expel the latter from her remembrance, but in vain, and the moſt predominant was continually preſenting itſelf, which was, that of Sir Edmond's having thought ſo lightly of her; and being included alſo by him with the generality of women; as he could act with ſo much *deceit* in her pre-

ſence, as to feign ſo tender a regard when he was on the verge of marrying another; and at the ſame time occupied in ſeducing Miſs Melmor.

She might perhaps have excuſed the deceitful ſophiſtry of his language, but for his countenance ſhe could find no extenuation; for when the eyes, thoſe laſt aſylums of truth, when they become falſe, then indeed the heart muſt be corrupted, and its depravity incurable But Sir Edmond was not quite ſo perfidious as he appeared to Malvina, and ſhe was not entirely deceived in him Her reaſon undoubtedly made her believe it, and it was that which induced her to condemn him; yet, notwithſtanding this, an inſtinctive feeling ſeemed to convince her of the contrary, and this cauſe induced her to love.

A prey to ſo many different ſenſations, ſhe more than ever regretted the misfor-

tune

tune she was to experience, in losing her friend; for it is generally found, that when under the pressure of one sorrow, it recalls every other to the heart, and we unite them all, that our sufferings may be more acute. She thought that by allowing the recollections of the past to press on her mind, it was the original cause of the sorrow which overwhelmed her. It was also more congenial to dwell on the remembrance of the past, as Sir Edmond had deprived her of every present satisfaction. Thus, by flying to the recollection of her friend, she sought consolation from Heaven, as there was not any for her upon Earth.

As to Miss Melmor, she heard the proposal of Mrs. Burton, from her mother, with much more tranquillity than could have been expected. The sudden departure of Sir Edmond, had taught her that she had nothing more to expect from him; the loss of such an alliance was certainly

certainly a great misfortune, but to find another who would marry her, was ſome conſolation; and ſhe pleaſed herſelf with the idea of his taking her into public, where ſhe would be ſeen to ſuch advantage.

The proſpect of dreſs, pleaſure, and conqueſt, ſoon filled her giddy imagination with a thouſand fluttering hopes, and excluded every thought of Sir Edmond. But on reflecting within herſelf, with more attention than her habitual levity would lead us to ſuppoſe, ſhe recollected, that in order to poſſeſs a greater latitude for the gratification of her vanity, it would be a neceſſary piece of policy to regain the favor of Mrs. Burton; and the moſt certain method of ſucceeding was by an entire ſubmiſſion to her will.

The fall of her hopes, by enlightening her mind, pointed out the cauſe of her errors; and ſhe endeavoured to find the

means

means of repairing them. Thoughtleſs and giddy, yet ſelf intereſt taught her to form a plan, and gave her conſtancy to purſue it. It is thus, that when folly is guided by a bad heart, ſhe has ſufficient diſcernment to ſeize what is moſt advantageous; avoid that which is gloomy, and make her way in the world.

The hope of a brilliant conqueſt had made Miſs Melmor arrogant; and adverſity would render her a hypocrite. She conſequently went to Mrs. Burton's apartment, and aſſumed a timid modeſt air, and with down caſt eyes, ſhe ſaid, my mother, madam, has informed me of your intention towards me; and you will find me ready to ſubmit to your commands, and by my obedience, expiate the imprudence of my conduct. But believe me, madam, thoughtleſſneſs has been my only fault; and I have never forgot myſelf ſo far, as to render myſelf undeſerving your kindneſs, and the virtuous

tuous example which I have ever bel
in you. Mrs. Burton, ſoftened by
ſubmiſſive introduction, was difar
by the flattery ſo artfully applied.
was ſo extravagantly fond of adulat
that ſhe never had a doubt of its ſince
therefore, Miſs Melmor was belie
For in characters of her deſcription,
love, reſembles a voracious animal, wl
devours without diſtinction, every th
which is offered it.

At the end of a month, Miſs Mel
was married to Mr. Fenwick; M
Burton determined to ſet out for E
burgh; and Mr. Prior was diſmi
from the caſtle. Six months earlier,
would have quitted it with rapture.
now, every thing was changed with h
when he was to leave Malvina. Ne
theleſs, he would not degrade him
by any ſolicitations. The firſt word fi
Mrs. Burton determined his departu
he continued not a moment longer in
hou

houſe, than what was ſufficient for the neceſſary preparations for his departure, and to bid an adieu to Malvina.

When he went to take his leave, ſhe, without heſitation, gave him the moſt ſincere promiſe of her unalterable friendſhip, in ſome meaſure to relieve the pain it occaſioned him to leave her. On quitting you, ſaid Mr. Prior, I feel as if I was going into darkneſs, and my ſoul is low, and without courage. Oh! Malvina, do not diſregard me in this day of my affliction: alas! on leaving you, I have not any thing left but your remembrance, and your letters, that can conſole me.—The firſt is ſo interwoven with my heart, from which nothing on earth can ever tear it; the other, I requeſt as a favour, and will depend entirely on yourſelf. You will not refuſe me?

Ah! could Malvina, from a reſpect to the opinion of a haughty woman (and a

depraved man), have rejected this affecting prayer; she would no longer have been the good the excellent creature, who always forgot herself for the benefit of others; and in this she gratified her reason and her heart at the same time. We should ever give more to the duties of friendship, than to social convenience; and it had ever been her idea, that public opinion should only be regarded when it respected self alone; and never be brought in competition with the most trifling circumstance that would give a moment's pain to friendship.

Mr. Fenwick was a writer to the Signet at Edinburgh—he was a little more than forty years of age, of a dark complexion, short, and thick-set; whimsical at home, but gay in company; a bankrupt in ideas, but possessed a good memory; a very trifling portion of wit, yet could create a general laugh by his method of telling tales. He flattered all the world and

and liked no one in it. In marrying Miſs Melmor, he had not even thought of her perſon, or whether her diſpoſition or character would correſpond with his own; and as to rendering her happy, it had never entered his imagination. But what was of infinite more conſequence, he had maturely reflected, that Mrs. Burton was vain, rich, without children; and that a union with one who was connected with her might prove peculiarly advantageous; and he was conſcious of poſſeſſing thoſe qualities which would enable him to draw with intereſt from ſuch a character as Mrs. Burton's. ' Some years preceding, when Mrs. Burton was in the zenith of her youth and beauty, and accuſtomed to the moſt refined flattery, ſhe would have deſpiſed ſuch as Mr. Fenwick's; but, as her age had forbid her to expect it, ſhe felt the deprivation ſo acutely, that ſhe condeſcended to receive it, though leſs delicately offered, than be entirely deprived of it. Mr. Fenwick treated his

wife as a child; her mother as an idiot; and Malvina as a viſionary. He preſerved all his praiſe and eſteem for Mrs Burton, and ſhe attracted ſo much of his regard, and repoſed ſo much confidence in him, that it muſt have been an enigma to all thoſe who knew the artfulneſs of her character, had not her devotion to ſelf love conſtantly betrayed her.

By diſmiſſing Mr. Prior ſo ſuddenly, her intention was not only to be revenged for the ſevere truths which he had dared to utter, and the enthuſiaſtic opinion which he had conceived of Malvina; but her ſecret aim was to inſinuate to Sir Edmond, that this ſudden rupture proceeded from no other cauſe than the ſcandalous intimacy which exiſted between Mr. Prior and Malvina. She had already, under the ſeal of ſecrecy, confided what ſhe termed her diſcoveries, to Taſſe her maid, and Mrs. Melmor; and this, repeated by her two echoes, was whiſpered to

to every one in the caſtle. But this did not ſatisfy Mrs. Burton, it muſt be conveyed to the ears of Sir Edmond; ſhe therefore determined to ſend Mrs. Melmor and Taſſe before her to Edinburgh, with the excuſe of preparing the houſe for Mrs. Burton's reception. Both were properly inſtructed in the information they were to give Sir Edmond of Mr. Prior's diſmiſſion; though ſhe knew perfectly well that her nephew would not believe any thing ſhe aſſerted. This was only to convince him that Malvina was ſtigmatiſed in every one's opinion; and ſhe was certain his pride would never let him marry a woman that was even ſuſpected.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

IT was the beginning of April, when Malvina ſet out with a party (to not one individual of which ſhe was very partial) for Edinburgh, a place ſhe was not very anxious to viſit, and where ſhe might meet the perſon, who, more than any other, ſhe moſt feared to behold. She however determined to accompany Mrs. Burton, from the conviction which her reaſon offered, which was, that the idea of a beloved object is much more dangerous at a diſtance, for then we embelliſh it according to our wiſhes; but, when

preſent

reſent, we behold it as it really is. She magined that when ſhe ſhould witneſs Sir dmond's attentions to ſo many women, nd alſo his union with Lady Mary Sumerhill, ſhe ſhould then have nothing more to fear on his account. Such were Malvina's ideas. When paſſion endeavours to find a pretext for its weakneſs, he imagination is always ready to offer one; but of all the ſubterfuges to which it is moſt liable, that is the moſt to be feared, which bewilders it ſo far, as to occaſion us to loſe ourſelves by its deluſions. It is of leſs importance when it only yields itſelf to fancy, than when it endeavours to juſtify them; and the exceſs of its delirium is leſs to be feared than the ſophiſms of its logic.

On the third day of their journey, Mrs. Burton informed her companions that they ſhould ſtop that evening at a Mrs. St. Clare's, whoſe manſion they would have to paſs. I formerly knew

this lady at Edinburgh, ſhe continued, at that time a very advantageous marriage, introduced her to the great world. She is now a widow, and having nearly loſt all her fortune, ſhe has retired into the country, and reſides with her father.—I cannot ſufficiently praiſe her for the fortitude ſhe has evinced in her misfortunes, and alſo for the uſe ſhe made of her liberty. But, I have lately heard ſhe has commenced authoreſs, and this information has leſſened her very much in my opinion; for I think that a woman who has once given herſelf up to this purſuit, will never be any thing in future but a pedant or a belle eſprit.

I rather coincide with your opinion in this reſpect, replied Malvina: nature has impoſed ſo many duties upon women, that it appears the time which they muſt devote to the public, muſt generally be at the expence of neglecting ſome of them. At the ſame time, a mother ſhould have a mind

well informed, that ſhe may inſtruct
hildren; but the poſſeſſion of any
ſcience will never compenſate for
il which her neglect of them will
on. While ſhe is perhaps writing
ucation, ſhe leaves her children to
re of mercenaries; and while ſhe
ting a diſſertation on the importance
filling her duties, it is another who
perform them for her. The con-
tion continued ſome time on this
ct; and in the evening, they arrived
e houſe of the lady who had given
o it.

lvina beheld a woman ſtill young,
: manners appeared ſimple, and
converſation not the leaſt above
is generally termed common, which
not in the leaſt coincide with her
of an authoreſs. At the firſt intro-
on ſhe appeared cold and diſtant, but
e courſe of the evening ſhe became
affable. Malvina received ſeveral in-

ſtances of her partiality, which appeared to be offered from her heart. Whether it was from ſympathy or gratitude on the part of Malvina, ſhe could not aſcertain, but ſhe felt a preference for Mrs. St. Clare; and the next morning ſhe joined her at a very early hour in the parlour, where they converſed with an intimacy which does not often reſult from ſo tranſient an acquaintance.

Mrs. St. Clare mentioned her predilection for ſtudy and retirement; and her partiality for the country, and all the pleaſures it afforded; but never mentioned her literary purſuits. Malvina ventured to mention the ſubject. A deep bluſh overſpread the countenance of Mrs. St. Clare, and heſitating for a moment, ſhe ſaid, I am ſorry to find how very difficult it is to prevent the world from being acquainted with our follies; every one is ſo eager to know, ſo capable in their own opinion to diſcern, and ſo

ready

ready to circulate them: but I am leſs concerned at that, than I am to find that you ſhould have been prejudiced againſt me, before you had ſeen me. It requires only to know you to deſtroy it, replied Malvina; and I have already reproached myſelf for it. Ah! do not endeavour to deny it, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, for you would not be the woman I think you, if you have not diſapproved my conduct, unleſs you had been acquainted with the motives which occaſioned it.

If I dare take ſuch a liberty, replied Malvina, you perhaps might attribute my enquiry to curioſity; yet believe me, when I aſſure you, that the intereſt you have inſpired, is the ſole cauſe which dictates it. Your eyes have already informed me of that, replied Mrs. St. Clare, ſmiling, and there is no occaſion to add entreaties to induce me to gratify you. If it is perfectly agreeable, we will retire into the garden; we ſhall be

leſs liable to be interrupted there we can converſe while walking. vina conſented to this propoſal pleaſure, and they went to the ſhrub where the firſt budding bloſſoms, pale verdure, had juſt began to dec trees.

CHAP. VI.

PREFACE.

I MUST draw a veil, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, over ſome particulars, which, on my retiring from the world, has taught me to love ſolitude. We are too little acquainted, for you to find any pleaſure in hearing my reſolution, and it is almoſt intruding in me to ſpeak on ſuch a ſubject; and though the preference which induces to this confidence would require ſome hours to explain it in, yet, if I relate ſome of the

particulars, it will be only to juſtify myſelf from an imputation which you have already heard; and the circumſtances from which it originated, can only excuſe.

You muſt imagine, in this retirement, I ought to have ſufficient leiſure for any amuſement, without children, and few duties to perform that intereſt me. Diſguſted with the world, and all its pleaſures; never could the remembrance of it afford a gleam of ſatisfaction, or occupy one moment of my retirement. I had but few friends with whom I kept up an intimacy, and was never troubled with the intruſion of viſitors. I was therefore to find reſources in myſelf, and endeavoured in a variety of ways to employ that leiſure, which each day became more inſupportable to me.

I alternately changed them from the fine arts, to domeſtic cares; from rural

rural pleaſures, to ſerious reading; and I thought no more blame could be attached to my writing a few things which pleaſed my fancy, than in ſinging or playing an air, or painting a landſcape. Yet, I muſt acknowledge, I found this new employment very ſeducing; it was delightful to pourtray with my pen, thoſe imaginary pictures, the reality of which, I had ſought for in vain in the world. And if I indulged myſelf in that which moſt pleaſed my taſte, it was in ſome meaſure, giving both a proof of it, and alſo that I never prejudiced any one. I really think, that whether a woman writes a romance, learns a ſcience, or works with her needle, they are all nearly equal, provided ſhe lives in obſcurity.

It is not the employment, but the uſe which is made of it, that ought to be cenſured. If ſhe can amuſe her friends by a tale which ſhe has pictured with her

pen, no one has a right to condemn
if ſhe ſtops there: but when ſhe per
it to be printed, ſhe then publickly
knowledges the value ſhe thinks it me
and from that moment ſhe muſt de
upon the critics ſeverity, without
pleaſure which ſhe had received f
the indulgence of friendſhip. Beſi
in laying a work open to public inſ
tion, not only the book, but the au
muſt ſubmit to their fiat.

If a woman mentions the foibles of
ſex, they are attributed to herſelf; i
paints their virtues, ſhe is taxed
arrogance; and it is univerſally ſupp
that ſhe only delineates the paſſion
her own heart, and thoſe ſituations w
ſhe has peculiarly remembered.
many dangers does a woman court, w
ſhe undertakes ſuch a purſuit; and
ſhould poſſeſs an uncommon degre
temerity, to attempt it.

Oh! Heaven, ſaid Malvina, you appear to know and feel the inconveniences attending it, ſo ſenſibly, that I will deſiſt from enquiring the cauſe which has induced your undertaking this purſuit; for I am convinced it muſt be very extraordinary; and I ſhould condemn myſelf, in requiring you to reveal it. I perfectly comprehend your delicacy, replied Mrs. St. Clare, and it places me quite at eaſe, for I have gone too far, by wiſhing to explain the motives of my conduct, which relates to a ſecret, ſo very particular, that not one being living, not even my father, is privy to it.

That is ſufficient my dear madam, interrupted Malvina, let the ſubject be buried in oblivion; only inform me, why, inſtead of writing romances, you did not exerciſe your pen on more uſeful ſubjects? Becauſe thoſe were moſt congenial to my mind, replied Mrs. St.

Clare, I was not capable of any other and I thought romances were moſt calculated for women, as they begin to read them as ſoon as they are fifteen. They, in ſome meaſure, realize them at twenty, and having nothing better to employ them, they write them at thirty. Alſo, I believe, that with a few exceptions of great writers, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this line, women are the moſt proper, for undoubtedly they can more particularly underſtand and delineate all the characteriſtics of ſentiment, which is in ſome degree the hiſtory of their lives; while it is an effort for men to write their epiſodes.

Then, ſaid Malvina, you limit our talents only to the knowledge of deſcribing affection, and you do not imagine that we can attain any thing higher? Perhaps there may ſome day be exceptions, replied Mrs. St. Clare; it would be a great temerity to ſet limits to our

capacities. But at the time, I do not know one; for thoſe women whoſe perceptions are not ſufficiently penetrating, or who cannot connect their ideas, can never poſſeſs genius. This truth which has been demonſtrated by facts, has been aſcribed to the faulty education which they receive. For how often do we ſee men born of the pooreſt parents, of the loweſt extraction, ſurrounded by prejudices, without any reſources, and as uninformed as women, raiſe themſelves by the force of their genius, from the greateſt obſcurity; enlighten the age they live in, and ſearch into the immenſity of futurity. Not one woman, that I have ever heard of, has ever ſtept in ſuch an original path.

But, replied Malvina, from the moment that women only write to diſplay their talents, would it not be more commendable to relinquiſh it, and conſecrate themſelves to the cares and duties of their

ſex? Certainly, returned her new frie
but remember, I do not allow any
write, but thoſe who are in a ſimilar ſi
tion with myſelf; and thoſe will be v
few in number. As wives and mot
of families conſtitute the greateſt par
our ſex, the importance of theſe du
will not permit them to employ th
time in works of imagination; occup
in the care of forming the minds of m
they ſhould leave others the power
amuſing them, and recollect, that
ſame hand which can form a ſtatue
marble, ſhould not amuſe itſelf w
toys.

CHAP. VII.

CURIOSITY NOT GRATIFIED.

IN ſo pleaſing a converſation, Mrs. St. Clare had nearly forgot that her viſitors might be waiting; and if ſhe had remembered them, ſhe was of that character who would have neglected them, when in converſing and liſtening to Malvina, of whom ſhe thought ſo highly. But Malvina, who could never forget any one, and who thought that kindneſs ſhould oblige the miſtreſs of a family, as well as politeneſs, to intereſt herſelf

herſelf in theſe little attentions which were neceſſary to her friends; and ſhe intimated to Mrs. St. Clare that it grew late, and perhaps Mrs. Burton might be ſurpriſed at their long abſence; ſhe acquieſced immediately with Malvina, and they returned to the houſe.

They found the party all aſſembled in the parlour; and they had been waiting ſome time. Mrs. St. Clare made a trifling apology, with an air of coolneſs, which Mrs. Burton received in the ſame manner, adding, without doubt Madame de Sorcy had found it very agreeable, as ſhe had detained Mrs. St. Clare entirely to herſelf. I candidly confeſs, replied ſhe, that your charming couſin is the cauſe of my negligence, and I have to thank her for reminding me of the time, or I might have entirely forgot myſelf in her company. But I imagine it is not neceſſary to explain this; ſuch happy friends as you are, that have the felicity of knowing

knowing her, as ſhe deſerves, will not be aſtoniſhed at the effect Madame de Sorcy has produced on me?

This eulogium, which was pronounced with energy, ſerved to increaſe, inſtead of diminiſhing Mrs. Burton's ill-humour. But Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick, attentive to every thing which they conſidered pleaſing to her, and coinciding with her opinion on every ſubject, the converſation ſoon became conſtrained and tireſome. Ennui appeared in the countenance of every one; and Mrs. Burton, who had at firſt intended to ſpend a few days with Mrs. St. Clare, determined to depart the next morning. Mrs. St. Clare endeavoured by every perſuaſion, to detain them, not from the pleaſure ſhe found in their ſociety, but only that ſhe might enjoy Malvina's ſome time longer, but all her efforts were uſeleſs—Mrs. Burton perſiſted in going, and gave as a reaſon for her quick departure, that her impatience

a ſmile of anguiſh, and I have obſerved likewiſe, that they reſemble each other in many reſpects, beſides thoſe you have mentioned. Not to their diſadvantage I hope, ſaid Mrs. Burton; they have ever poſſeſſed the applauſe of the world, therefore no one can ſuppoſe otherwiſe. Mrs. Burton did not make any farther enquiries; and Mrs. St. Clare changed the converſation.

But tranſient as this diſcourſe had been, it affected Malvina. What would she not have given for a ſolution of Mrs. St. Clare's evaſive anſwers. How much she wiſhed to be alone with her, that ſhe might have an opportunity of introducing the ſubject; but how could ſhe do this, without giving her cauſe to ſuſpect the intereſt ſhe took in it herſelf? In ſhort, what conſequence was it to her, to intereſt herſelf in the union of Sir Edward, and Lady Mary Summerhill; or to

to wish to develope the insinuations of Mrs. St. Clare!

Had she not determined in her own mind, that a man of such a character did not deserve to occupy her thoughts; though while thinking this, she seldom thought of any thing else, and it appeared as if she felt a pleasure in recollecting his vices, that she might have an excuse for continuing to remember him; and preferred painting him in the most odious colours, than entirely to forget him.

Notwithstanding all her resolutions, a secret instinct prompted her to seek every opportunity of being alone with Mrs. St. Clare, but in vain, for Mrs. Fenwick, curious and intruding, never left them all the day, and she was obliged to retire in the evening, without having satisfied those surmises which gave such pain to her heart.

The

The next morning she was at her window at day-break, impatiently waiting the time which would assemble the family together. As soon as she thought her appearance in the parlour would not be considered singular, she went down, but found the servants setting it in order, and Mrs. St. Clare not up. She therefore walked into the garden, and walked near half an hour (rather impatiently) before her friend joined her. I know that you have been an early riser, said she, and when I add this to the amiable and interesting eagerness of your reception, and to those particular looks of surprise, I marked yesterday, and your expressive though silent wish to speak to me; all is allows me to imagine that you have something to say to me—am I deceived in my conjectures?

This question prevented Malvina from making the so much desired enquiry. Mrs. St. Clare's remarks convinced her that

that if she interrogated her in respect t
Sir Edmond, it would be confiding t
interest she took in him; and she pr
ferred continuing silent, rather than t
expose herself to this suspicion. Sh
therefore replied in an evasive manne
and entered into one of those disagreeabl
conversations where we speak on eve
other subject but that which is near
the heart.

They were soon joined by Mrs. Fe
wick, to whom the pleasing ideas o
leaving the present society, and perhaps
arriving at Edinburgh that day, ha
awakened early for the first time in h
life. She eagerly hastened to them, th
they might be sooner ready to set ou
Mrs. St. Clare very easily penetrate
into the mind of this lady, and thoug
it only natural at her age, that she shoul
be fond of pleasure. There is not
doubt, she added, but the marriage o
Sir Edmond will produce balls and en
tertainment

nts of every kind; and you
erſonal advantages ſufficient to
of the moſt brilliant ornaments
em.

hat is all I wiſh, ſaid Mrs. Fen-
h giddineſs; I ſhall not be ſatis-
out I eclipſe all the women in
gh; particularly that odious
ry. Why do you wiſh to do
d Mrs. St. Clare? Do you envy
honor of having fixed Sir Ed-
I do not know that ſhe has any
o be proud of ſuch an honor,
Mrs. Fenwick, from the manner
he laſt mentioned her to me, I
vinced that her fortune is the
n which attracts him.

your ſuppoſition very erroneous,
replied Malvina, ſharply, for of
ults with which Sir Edmond is
ed, I have never heard him ac-
being intereſted; and it appears

to

to me on the contrary, that a noble generosity is the peculiar trait of his character. Do you know him, madam? asked Mrs. St. Clare, rather amazed. Can you doubt it? replied Mrs. Fenwick, ironically; from the manner in which she has drawn him, should you not have guessed it was done by a friend?—Yes, Madame de Sorcy knows him very well; they have passed nearly three months together this winter, at Mrs. Burton's.

But the only thing which astonishes me, is, that notwithstanding the charms of this lady, and the distinguished regard she has for him, and the peculiar fancy which he has for women, that she did not fix him for one moment seriously. Is it not true, my dear, that he was only jesting, when he spoke to you of love? at least he told me so. Mrs. St. Clare pretended not to observe the distress which Malvina appeared in, at this account; and addressing Mrs. Fenwick, she

ſhe ſaid, I am ſure he could not have dared to ſpeak to her in jeſt. Sir Edmond muſt know her better than to feel at his eaſe near Madame de Sorcy; and he ought to have felt that the general lover of all women ſhould never be her's. Her character reminds me of thoſe verſes I have read in ſome poet—I have forgot who.

What, ſhall I ſupport ſuch a degradation,
Among a crowd? ſhall I diſpute for my lover?
No, my heart diſdains a frivolous admirer,
He who does not know ſo pure a ſentiment.

The manner in which Mrs. St. Clare recited theſe lines, gave Malvina pleaſure (I am very fond of poetry, ſaid ſhe, glad to change the ſubject) particularly if it is ſpoken with feeling and animation—it is then muſic to the ſoul. If you approve them, replied Mrs. St. Clare, looking at her attentively, I will repeat you a few more lines, which will pleaſe you ſtill more.

On

On hearing theſe verſes, Malvina experienced a peculiar ſenſation of diſtreſs oppreſs her heart, without daring to ſearch into the cauſe, or know why ſhe felt it. She found it was impoſſible to anſwer Mrs. St. Clare; and as they were near the houſe, ſhe haſtily entered it. From that moment, her hoſteſs became melancholy, ſhe looked at Malvina with the moſt tender ſolicitude, and ſcarcely paid any attention to what was addreſſed to herſelf.

Breakfaſt being finiſhed, the carriages were brought into the court-yard, and in a few minutes, Mrs. Burton roſe to go, as they were all ready. Mrs. St. Clare took the opportunity of their taking leave, to approach Malvina, who ſtood motionleſs by the fire, and preſſing her in her arms, ſhe whiſpered, if I have gueſſed right, how I pity you, and how much do I regret the not having ſpoken to you. Why cannot you con-

ſent

ſent to remain here, it would perhaps be an aſylum againſt the dangers which you do not foreſee. Yet juſt now, probably it might appear whimſical, or capricious: but will you promiſe me (if anything ſhould occur that may induce you to leave Edinburgh, before Mrs. Burton ſhall chuſes to quit it) that you will come here, and wait her arrival?

Malvina aſſured her ſhe would; and returned her many acknowledgments for the intereſt ſhe expreſſed in her welfare, and bidding her a laſt adieu, ſhe was hurrying to the carriage, when Mrs. St. Clare ſaid, with an air of confuſion, I have one more favor to requeſt, which is, that you will not inform Sir Edmond that I have ever mentioned him; and I entreat you will not queſtion him on any thing relative to me? Malvina promiſed to conform to all ſhe required, though accompanied with a look of aſtoniſhment, which might be tranſlated that ſhe conſidered

rived, and if they were yet visible My lady is gone out with Mrs. Fenwic replied the maid, but Madame de Sor is at home; if you chuse, I suppose yo may see her?

By no means, that would be useless- I shall call another time. Certainly Mal vina did not desire to see him, as the idea of it only had occasioned a tremor, and she would have undoubtedly avoided him. But his refusing to see her when she was at home, and alone; what could she surmise from such behaviour? Could she now doubt of his indifference; and did it not appear that he wished her to be sensible of it?

What insupportable wretchedness at that moment oppressed her heart; one part of which arose from the conviction of having been deceived, and the sor row this blameable weakness had pro duced, from having been guilty of suc

a

She wept bitterly, but fuddenering herſelf, and wiping away s, ſhe exclaimed, ah! Sir Edit was your deſign by pretendments which you never felt, to ne your victim, and enjoy my ieſs, your intention has not ompliſhed, for I am perfectly ſuch a weakneſs.

lurton ſoon after returned, acd by a young gentleman of a aſing figure, though there was g forbidding and contemptuous nner. On ſeeing Malvina, he l ſurpriſed, and ſaluted her with pect. This lady, ſaid he to Mrs. is certainly the amiable relation ou have mentioned; I am certain will be charmed with her acce. My couſin will be much by ſuch a favor, replied Mrs. looking at Malvina, with an exwhich deſired ſhe would con-

firm the aſſertion; but not receiving any anſwer, ſhe added, with ſome aſperity, do you not know that it is my Lord Stanhope, the brother of Lady Mary Summerhill, who I have the honor of introducing to you?

Malvina bowed, but continued ſilent. As I hope Madame de Sorcy will grace the entertainment my uncle is preparing, ſaid Lord Stanhope, and as I make no doubt the honor of dancing with her will be diſputed, may I be permitted to requeſt the favor of her hand for that day, that I may not be anticipated by a rival? Excuſe me, my lord, replied Malvina, but as I do not intend to frequent any entertainments during the ſhort ſtay I ſhall make at Edinburgh, I cannot therefore accept your very polite invitation. On ſaying this, ſhe reſpectfully bowed, and left the room. Whimſical, perhaps, replied Lord Stanhope, but divinely handſome. Dear Mrs. Burton,

ton, you muſt prevail upon her to accompany you to my uncle's—abſolutely you muſt. I wiſh to be acquainted with ſuch a woman. Heaven confound me, if I have ever ſeen one who intereſted me ſo much.

You do my couſin infinite honor, my lord, replied Mrs. Burton, and I promiſe to uſe all my powers to engage her to accept your very flattering invitation, but though ſhe is naturally gentle, yet ſhe is very opiniated in ſome particulars, which makes her appear rather unpoliſhed, and her diſpoſition rude. So much the better, interrupted Lord Stanhope, laughing, I know nothing ſo ſeducing as theſe ſcornful beauties, when we know how to tame them.

Take care, my lord, ſaid Mrs. Burton, ſhe is not one of thoſe that can be acted upon in that manner; ſhe is a relation of my own, and a woman of condition,

which ought to place her beyond reach of any but honorable attem Go, go, Mrs. Burton, replied Lord S hope, with an air of ſuperiority, wh is never ſo diſagreeable as when it wil to appear affable; only give me an portunity of ſeeing her frequently, I I may appear as amiable to her, as h handſome, and then I am at liberty know, and who can anſwer for the futu perhaps I may be deſtined to double alliance with your family. But I c jure you to go to her, and endeav to prevail, that I may have her anſ before I leave you.

Mrs. Burton, ready to facilitate wiſhes of Lord Stanhope, and el with the hope of contributing to aggrandizement of her family, hurrie Malvina. You cannot, my dear, Mrs. Burton, diſpenſe with appearin my Lord Stafford's entertainment; from being introduced to the charm

crea

creature who is ſoon to conſtitute one of my family. I have a preſentiment in your favor, that ſhe will be anxious to commence an acquaintance with you.

Malvina wiſhed to excuſe herſelf, by intimating, that entertainments neither ſuited her taſte, or her ſituation. But I entreat that you will not refuſe me, replied Mrs. Burton, for I have promiſed for you, and Lady Mary will expect you. If it is your earneſt deſire, interrupted Malvina, perhaps I would acquieſce to oblige you; but, to ſatisfy Lady Mary's whim—You have reſolved then to diſoblige me, replied Mrs. Burton, haſtily? and I obſerve that you conceal, under the veil of gentleneſs, a very perverſe diſpoſition. It is very unfortunate, ſhe continued, and claſping her hands, that one never can prevail or obtain any thing of ſome people.

It is becauſe theſe kind of people replied Malvina, that are ſo determined in their refuſals and caprice, would yield immediately to a kind word, or an obliging entreaty. Mrs. Burton was ſurpriſed at the manner in which this was ſaid; for ſhe was unconſcious that Malvina's heart was diſtreſſed by Sir Edmond's conduct, and the idea of being noticed at Lady Mary's fête, had given a degree of aſperity to her naturally ſweet diſpoſition. So far from offending, it had a contrary effect on Mrs. Burton; for in general, the moſt violent characters are the ſooneſt overcome, when they meet with reſiſtance, and ſubmit to ſeverity; when gentleneſs could have no power over them.

Mrs. Burton again made uſe of every perſuaſion; and Malvina, ſorry that ſhe had appeared ill-humoured, was conſequently obliged to yield to her couſin's entreaties, in order to compenſate for it.

As

As this gala was not to take place for eight days, Malvina obtained permiſſion to paſs the intermediate time without appearing in public. Her reaſon for this was, not merely to gratify her own taſte for retirement, and her duty of attending Frances, but rather to ſatisfy a ſenſation of pride, by letting Sir Edmond know that ſhe did not even wiſh to ſee him.

For ſeveral days, Mrs. Burton and Mrs. Fenwick were continually from home; they never ſaw Malvina but at table, and that time was generally employed in converſing of what they had ſeen. Mrs. Fenwick in particular, was never tired of ſpeaking on pleaſures ſo congenial to her taſte. Malvina, who had hoped by not mixing with the world, that ſhe might have enjoyed the ſame repoſe at Edinburgh as ſhe had experienced at Burton-Hall, perceived at the end of a few days, how little the ſolitude

of a city was to be compared with that of the country. There, her diſtance from ſociety occaſioned her entirely to forget it, or, if remembered, it was only to appreciate it as it deſerved, and congratulated herſelf, that ſhe was ſeparated from it.

Inſtead of which, the living ſecluded in a city, renders us liable to have our tranquillity diſturbed, by hearing of deceitful pleaſures, and obſerving the unthinking giddineſs which they occaſion. The flattering praiſes they give riſe to, create too often, inſtead of pleaſure, uneaſineſs; and when we hear the ſounds of mirth and rejoicing around us, our ſolitude appears only a name, and the ſilence of a frightful deſart. But, what we experience in the boſom of nature, that is iſolated, pure and tranquil.

The hours had ceaſed to paſs with their uſual rapidity—with Malvina, her occupations

patience had loſt their charms, and ſhe could not abſtract herſelf from the noiſe and hurry which ſurrounded her. Not a perſon entered the houſe, but ſhe liſtened attentively to hear who it was.

Fancying ſhe knew the ſtep of Sir Edmond, her anxiety prevented her from fixing on any other idea, and ſhe could not hear him come up ſtairs without a tremor; in ſhort, the fear of meeting him, and the uncertainty ſhe was under, on account of the motive which kept him from wiſhing to ſee her, accompanied by a deſire to know if he had ever mentioned her, was the continual ſubject of her thoughts. In theſe moments, ſhe frequently regretted the loſs of Mr. Prior. It was from him that ſhe became acquainted with many particulars relative to Sir Edmond, while Mrs. Burton and Mrs. Fenwick ſeemed carefully to avoid mentioning him in her preſence.

As

poſſibly avoid it. Soon after this
mination, ſhe was ſent for by Mrs.
ton and Mrs. Fenwick, to aſſiſt i
choice of ſome head dreſſes, whic
milliner had brought for their inſpe
Not having any plauſible motive fo
nying, ſhe ſent word ſhe would wa
them, but as ſoon as ſhe had give
promiſe, the idea of meeting Sir Ed
created ſuch an agitation, that her
tenance appeared changed; aſham
feeling ſo much, ſhe wiſhed for more
to collect herſelf, but this was vai
the more ſhe reflected on this inter
the more her agitation increaſed

As she was passing through an adjacent room to go to Mrs. Burton, she observed a woman who appeared to be in the middling rank of life, and whose countenance was very prepossessing, weeping bitterly. She instantly went to her, and, with an air of infinite goodness, enquired the cause of her affliction. Ah! madam, said she, I came here with the hope that Mrs. Burton would have assisted me. I was told she is benevolent! but she says she has done so much for the poor—and Heaven knows I did not come to ask charity; I only intreated her to speak to my Lord Stanhope. And what business can you have with Lord Stanhope? asked Malvina. Ah! madam, you are very good to wish to be informed of it; if all the persons in this house had such a heart as your's, I should not have been repulsed with so much harshness.

Have they all treated you equally ill? said Malvina, with some uneasiness, fearing

ing Sir Edmond was of the numb
Mrs. Burton, madam, rang the bell,
reprimanded the ſervants for permi
me to go in. I obſerved a young
who was employed in chooſing c
without deigning to look at me, my l
Stanhope, to whom I wiſhed to ad
myſelf, repulſed me with haughtineſs
ling me, that this affair belonged ent
to his ſteward.—At laſt, a little man
me by the arm to turn me out of
room, when a young gentleman,
bleſs him, came up to me, and
put this in my hand (ſhewing a note
ten pounds) aſked for my direction,
promiſed to take care of me. Well,
good woman, ſaid Malvina, her heart
lieved by this laſt ſentence; has not
generoſity of this young man eaſed y
diſtreſs? Certainly, madam; but I
not know when I ſhall ſee him; and
to-morrow, we muſt be ſent away. H
I mean—who will ſend you a

W

Why, madam, I let ready furniſhed lodgings, in a houſe which belongs to my Lord Stanhope, and it is ſituated in a commercial part of the town; I have hitherto gained a livelihood by it, and brought up a large family.—For this reaſon, my lord's ſteward, Mr. Bingham, refuſes to let me renew the leaſe of this houſe, and wiſhes me to quit it, that he may have it for his nephew. But, as I had the hopes of continuing in it, I have been at the expence of many repairs, which they refuſe to pay me for; ſo that now, both myſelf and my poor children will be ruined.

Be comforted, my good woman, ſaid Malvina, affectionately; ſince Lord Stanhope is with my couſin, I promiſe you, though I ſcarcely know him, to ſpeak in your favour. Mrs. Moody, much affected by ſuch kindneſs, took Malvina's hand, and preſſed it to her lips. Juſt at this inſtant, Sir Edmond came out of the room

room where Mrs. Burton was; and ſ
ing Malvina, he ſtarted; but recoveri
himſelf, he only bowed with much co
neſs, and paſſed on without ſpeaking
her.

Malvina remained motionleſs—ſo ma
different thoughts and ſenſations ov
powered her, that ſhe could no longer thi
of any thing elſe. It was not merely t
indifference which ſhe remarked in t
behaviour of Sir Edmond, but a pe
liar degree of unpoliteneſs, which
could not account for. Not to ſpeak
her, and to leave the room at the ti
he knew ſhe was coming down to M
Burton. Was there not a degree of
ſolence in ſuch behaviour? And did
not appear as if he wiſhed her to im
gine that he had authority to treat
as he pleaſed? And what could ha
given him this licence? And was it
degrading in her to allow him to p
ceive that ſhe would put up with it?

Reflecti

Reflecting thus on what had paſſed, ſhe recollected, with ſome confuſion, thoſe moments of kindneſs (for ſhe termed them ſo) when ſhe had let him perceive the intereſt ſhe felt towards him. The diſſatisfaction ſhe experienced on her having diſtinguiſhed him, and alſo in being deceived by the pretended preference which he had endeavoured to make her ſuppoſe he had felt, while at Burton-Hall, alternately preſſed upon her heart, and loaded it with bitterneſs. Certainly her credulity had not eſcaped the ſupercilious eyes of Sir Edmond; and might ſhe not juſtly fear that he had made a jeſt of it.—And it was certainly to undeceive her that he acted at preſent with ſuch marked coolneſs. What an agonizing idea, for ſuch a delicate and dignified mind as Malvina's!

She remained abſorbed by theſe diſtreſſing ſenſations, when Mrs. Fenwick appeared. —Ah! what are you doing there?

there? ſhe exclaimed—I am come
fetch you—we have been waiting hou
for you. Theſe words recalled Malvi
to herſelf; and bidding Mrs. Mooc
farewell, with the utmoſt kindneſs, ſh
went into the drawing-room.

You will never be able to gueſs, m
dam, if you was to try for fifty year
ſaid Mrs. Fenwick, who has occaſione
Madame de Sorcy to make you wait
long. Will you believe, that I found he
tête-à-tête, in the anti-chamber with th
crying old woman who came to plagu
us a little while ago. That does not ſu
priſe me, replied Mrs. Burton, ironically
for I have long known that my couſi
has a peculiar regard for ſuch kind o
people.

Say rather, madam, replied Malvin
with a little aſperity, that if I do fin
any pleaſure in it, I am perfectly ce
tain I ſhall not deprive any one here

ſuch a felicity. You certainly muſt imagine, replied Mrs. Burton, colouring, that there is no perſon but yourſelf who knows how to liſten to the complaints of the unhappy? Is that the requeſt of old Moody, that Madame de Sorcy is ſo particularly intereſted in? interrupted Lord Stanhope. If that is the caſe, ſhe could not have choſen a better advocate; and immediately, without knowing her wiſhes, he ſaid, I will give orders that all ſhe requires ſhall be granted.

But I thought, my lord, replied Malvina, ſhe had explained to you all that ſhe wiſhed to obtain. Faith, it may be ſo, ſaid Lord Stanhope; but may I die if I liſtened to one word ſhe ſaid to me; for theſe old figures make ſuch ugly faces when they are crying, that I always turn away when they begin.

Good God! my dear, when will you have done with that tireſome conference? ſaid Mrs.

Mrs. Fenwick:—come and look at all theſe charming things; ſhewing her ſeveral head dreſſes.—Here is a cap for the ball—is it not enchanting? But you are come too late; there only remains this, giving her one in a very bad taſte.

Malvina took it; and though ſo much occupied with different thoughts, yet, with the aſſiſtance of a few pins, and her own exquiſite taſte, ſhe gave it ſo graceful an appearance, that Mrs. Fenwick was mortified. Certainly, ſaid ſhe, making likewiſe ſome alterations in one of the caps, you have the art of rendering it the moſt elegant of them all, which will be ſeen in the party to-morrow.

What party? enquired Malvina. We have planned a trip to the gulph of Edinburgh, ſaid Lord Stanhope, that Mrs. Fenwick may view the ſea; and I hope I ſhall be permitted the honor of taking you in my phaeton. I ſhall go with you, couſin,

couſin, ſaid Mrs. Burton; obſerving that ſhe heſitated—Malvina then replied that ſhe would go with pleaſure; and went to the milliner to make choice of a hat. Mrs. Fenwick, leaning towards her, ſaid, in a whiſper, you are to go with Lord Stanhope, becauſe Sir Edmond has inſiſted that I ſhall accompany him in the phaeton in which he takes Lady Mary; and he appeared fearful that they would not have offered you a place, as he certainly ſeemed averſe to have you with him. Was it not whimſical?

No really, replied Malvina, with an aſſumed calmneſs; he has many reaſons to think your ſociety more agreeable than mine. And what are thoſe reaſons? enquired Mrs. Fenwick, with an air of raillery.—It certainly does not proceed from any value that I attach to them, or any alterations on my part to pleaſe him. I believe the hand which has ſo elegantly arranged this hat (returning it to Mal-

vina,

vina, with an air of envy) is much more occupied than I am with that concern. If you prefer this to the others, ſaid Malvina, who penetrated her thoughts, you had better take it; or if you wiſh that I ſhould alter your's more to your taſte, I will do it with pleaſure?

Ah! you will oblige me infinitely, ſaid Mrs. Fenwick, eagerly; really, my dear, you are extremely kind. Malvina ſmiled; and while ſhe was employed in pleaſing Mrs. Fenwick, Lord Stanhope approached her, and kiſſing her hand with the greateſt reſpect, ſaid, it is the French alone who can give a finiſhing grace to all they touch. And it is only the Engliſh who are inviolable in adhering to their word: is it not ſo, my lord? ſaid Malvina, ſmiling.

I underſtand you, madam, replied he; and you ſhall ſee that I have not forgot your petitioner.—And taking a ſheet of paper,

paper, he wrote the following words with a pencil—

"I desire that Bingham will fulfill all the arrangements which are most agreeable to Mrs. Moody, relative to the house which she rents.

STANHOPE."

Will that satisfy you, madam? said Lord Stanhope, presenting her the paper. Me, my lord, said Malvina, blushing; but certainly it was from the kind intention of serving and relieving the good mother of a family, and not to please me, that you have written this? On my honor you deceive yourself by such a supposition; for I candidly acknowledge I thought only of you.

What! my lord, in performing so good an action, do you relinquish the sweetest reward that can be offered to the heart; the silent satisfaction of *giving* joy to

this poor family, who believed t
ſelves ruined; and who will, by you
terceſſion, be rendered happy for l
May I die if ever I trouble myſelf
ſuch affairs; but you ſpeak of it wi
much animation, that you almoſt in
me to wiſh to think in the ſame ma
if I had time, but I have not a mo
to ſpare; and I have even forgot m
while with you, that I am expe&e
take a ride on horſe-back. What,
already two o'clock? cried he, loo
at his watch Ah, good Heavens,
I ſhall be rated! I muſt make fifty t
ſand excuſes, and be extremely ſorr
the ſame time, ſaid he, with a gay
and kiſſing the hand of Malvina, he
tinued, to-morrow, ladies—remembe
morrow.

Malvina, in a few minutes, wen
ſee if Mrs. Moody was yet in the h
but not finding her, ſhe immediately
Tomkins to her, with Lord Stanh

a

rder; who, on her return, gave ſo lively a
icture of Mrs. Moody's joy, and alſo
hat of her children, that Malvina was
elighted; and ſhe alſo humbly requeſt-
d that her generous benefactreſs would
ll on them at that houſe, which ſhe
red to her interceſſion.

Malvina did not heſitate to comply
th her wiſhes, which were perfectly
reeable to her own; and the ſame even-
g, as ſoon as her couſin was gone to
play, ſhe ſet out for Mrs. Moody's.
her arrival, the good woman, as ſoon
he firſt effuſions of her gratitude had
ſided, ſaid to Malvina, ah! madam,
piece of good fortune never comes
ne; for the moment before you arrived,
id a viſit from that good young gen-
an — Sir Edmond, interrupted Mal-
a: I do not know his name, madam;
came to enquire in what he could
e me; and was much ſurpriſed, I as-

this poor family, who [illegible]aim Lord Stan-
ſelves ruined; and wh[illegible]
terceſſion, be rende[illegible]
May I die if ever [illegible]ired to know by wha
ſuch affairs; b[illegible]ained it? I told him
much anima[illegible] for it to one of the ladie
me to wiſh [illegible]rs. Burton's.—Which, which
if I had [illegible]ith quickneſs? But as I coul
to ſpar[illegible]rm him of your name, I coul
whil[illegible]ſſure him it was the beſt, and,
tak[illegible]ved, the handſomeſt. It can be n
a[illegible]than Madame de Sorcy, replied th
gentleman (perhaps, madam, that is your name) as he appeared to be very well acquainted with you; and I am certain he is attached to you; for he continued My good creature, liſten to me; whe ever you are afflicted, inform Madame Sorcy of it, and ſhe will comfort you If any unfortunate perſon is in diſtre apply to her, and ſhe will relieve him in ſhort, if you wiſh to expreſs in word all that is good, generous, amiab

[redacted] this world, name Malvina

[redacted] madam, I fancied he had tears [redacted] eyes as he uttered this, he appeared [redacted] much affected. But do not mention a [redacted] that has paſſed, ſaid ſhe, when I [redacted] him that I expected you. But as [redacted] he had requeſted this, he flew [redacted] with ſuch precipitation, that he did [redacted] me time to thank him for his [redacted] as he had brought me more [redacted]

[redacted] was Malvina to conclude from [redacted] exhibited? What was ſhe to think from [redacted] praiſes Sir Edmond had beſtowed [redacted] her?—Did they in the leaſt coincide [redacted] the evident proofs ſhe had obſerved [redacted] wiſhing to avoid her? But with- [redacted] wiſhing to penetrate into the motives [redacted] this whimſical conduct, and too proud [redacted] condeſcend to trouble herſelf concern- [redacted] him, as he did not appear to wiſh it;

ſhe therefore left Mrs. Moody, wi
enquiring what it was he had come t
her, or mentioning his name.

The next morning, before ſhe
quitted her room, ſhe heard the no
carriages, which appeared to be nea
houſe; when ſtepping to the windo
obſerved the two phaetons of Lord
hope and Sir Edmond's, juſt en
Mrs. Burton's court-yard. She i
diately went down, and at the bott
the ſtairs ſhe met Sir Edmond, wh
giving his hand to Mrs. Fenwick,
ſaid, as he hurried away, we muſt f
firſt, to take Lady Mary; but do
haſten to make your appearance, for
humble adored Lord Stanhope is w
for you. Sir Edmond, after ſli
bowing, added, what he intended t
be thought coolneſs, was in reality
pique.

Ah! who would not be one to ſuch a lady; in paying her his vows, my Lord Stanhope ſubmits only to the general rule. Malvina did not wait to hear the concluſion of this ſentence, but bowing to Mrs. Fenwick, ſhe entered the ſaloon. During the ride, ſhe had no opportunity of being Sir Edmond, nor of being introduced to his intended bride, as not any of the ladies chooſe to quit their carriages, to walk. Malvina abſolutely determined to baniſh the idea of Sir Edmond from her mind, to endeavour to amuſe herſelf with all around, and not permit herſelf to think; ſhe forced herſelf to join in the converſation, which ſo much delighted Lord Stanhope, that he involuntarily ſaid in a whiſper, to Mrs. Burton, really I am more than half a fool; and if this fancy continues, I ſhall not be very unwilling to reſign my liberty.

But, notwithstanding the appea
Malvina assumed, to render herself sim
it is certain she had no other motiv
to endeavour to dissipate the remeimb
of Sir Edmond. Ought the hope
citing his self-love and jealousy
accounted as nothing? Yet Malvin
sessed so pure and refined a mind,
cannot believe this could be the rea

CHAP. IX.

THE BALL.

THE deſtined day at laſt arrived, on which the ball was to be given. Perhaps Malvina was not extremely ſorry; and perhaps alſo, without being conſcious of it, ſhe had employed more pains at her toilet than uſual.

As ſhe went down to her couſin, ſhe learned from Taſſe, that there was a great deal of company aſſembled in the drawing-room; but as ſhe knew Sir Edmond was not there, ſhe entered without the

leaſt embarraſſment. She obſerved ſeveral gentlemen ſtanding near Mrs. Burton's chair, and near Mrs. Fenwick. But on the entrance of Malvina, all eyes were fixed upon her, and ſhe excited general admiration. Her dreſs was neither rich or particular; a ſimple robe of crape conſtituted all her ornaments; but in her air and manner, there was an undefinable grace, and a taſte which cannot be acquired, which is very ſeldom well imitated, and is ſimilar to an artificial complexion, when compared with the bloom of nature.

When Mrs. Burton roſe to go, Lord Stanhope offered his hand to Malvina to conduct her to the carriage, and took this opportunity of reminding her of the promiſe ſhe had given, of accepting himſelf as a partner for the evening. She begged he would excuſe her from dancing, particularly as ſhe did not know any of the Scotch dances. On entering the aſſem-

bly-room,

by-room, Mrs. Burton placed herſelf near Lady Mary, and introduced Malvina to her. Her ladyſhip was near fifty; ſhe was one of thoſe regular beauties, which poſſeſs neither expreſſion or animation, and excites only the momentary admiration of others, without inſpiring any intereſt in the poſſeſſor.—She examined Malvina with a ſcrutinizing attention, that nearly amounted to rudeneſs; then taking her hand, with much vivacity, ſhe told her ſhe was delighted to ſee her, and ſhould rejoice to be acquainted with ſo charming a perſon:—and after this, never exchanged a ſentence with her the remainder of the evening.

Malvina, ſurrounded by a brilliant circle with whom ſhe was unacquainted, felt not the leaſt intereſted in any one that compoſed it; and was tired, though Lord Stanhope was inceſſantly near her, and prodigal to exceſs of his attentions. But he ſoon obſerved that ſhe anſwered

with reſerve, to all his compliments. He then endeavoured to amuſe her, by relating ſeveral entertaining anecdotes of the different perſons who paſſed before them; and as this was a converſation in which he moſt excelled, he by this means obtained, for a few moments, a faint ſmile from Malvina. Notwithſtanding ſhe was ſo diſſatisfied with the ball, yet ſhe did not evince the leaſt deſire to leave it; when every thing changed its appearance by the entrance of Sir Edmond.

He went up to Lady Mary with a gallant and eaſy negligence, whiſpered a few words, which ſhe appeared to liſten to, with viſible pleaſure. Then turning towards the place where Mrs. Burton was ſeated, he perceived Malvina. But it was not the melancholy, pale Malvina, whoſe negligence veiled her charms.—Now ſhe appeared with all that dignity and elegance ſo natural to her; the lights, the heat, and the agitation, had animated

he

[redacted] and she appeared so fascinating and beautiful, that he was not master of himself, and afraid of engaging Lady [redacted] to dance with him as he had intended, he instantly intreated Malvina to honor him with her hand for the evening.

Malvina, surprised at this invitation, could not help observing the same expression in his eyes, that he had formerly seen, was hurt, at the same time, by the behaviour of a man who constantly appeared to make a jest of her suspence.—She therefore very coolly answered, that if she had determined to dance at all, she was already engaged to Lord Stanhope. But, replied Sir Edmond, allow me to hope, surveying her with the most tender anxiety, that if Lord Stanhope must be the happy mortal whom you thus honor, that after supper, when the French dances commence, which are as changeable as all those who come from that country;

country; that then we may be permitted to change partners. Malvina gave him a look of diſdain, without replying. He added, you are ſilent madam; muſt I tranſlate it as a refuſal, to the only hope I had indulged of aſpiring to the favor of your hand, for one dance only?

As Sir Edmond, replied Malvina, is apparently ſo univerſally diſtinguiſhed (forcing a ſmile) he has not an idea it can ever be otherwiſe: but, that I may not follow his example, I agree to dance with him, juſt as I would with any other perſon. And as any other, madam, replied he, rather piqued, I ſhall call upon you for the firſt country dance? Malvina bowed, and Sir Edmond left her.

It ſhould be remembered, that Sir Edmond had quitted Burton-Hall, irritated againſt Malvina, from being dubious of her affection; but as he confided in the virtues of her heart, he anxiouſly

anxiously looked forward to the moment when he should again behold her.

Since his return to Edinburgh, the females who used to please him, now appeared indifferent, and if from habit he was still attached to their company, yet his heart was so entirely occupied by another object, that he was at some pains to abstract his mind sufficiently, to find any thing to say to them. His friends were astonished to observe him so often thoughtful, and sometimes melancholy. They imputed it to the gloomy retirement in the mountains, which they supposed had undermined his spirits and gaiety; and their conjectures were not without foundation; but he could have dispensed with their pity, which they were so ready to bestow; for he had become more happy since he had thus lost himself.

He was in love! Ah! with what new charms had this passion embellished the universe

to

to him. He loved [illegible] the
the cafe, of what impa[illegible]
all the gratifications of felf-love;
the moft exquifite voluptuoufnefs
could he find a pleafure that was
of occupying the heart, [illegible]
by the image of Malvina. The
amiable only attracted his attention
he thought they poffeffed any qua
which refembled her.

All that the world could produce
perfection, in his opinion, was the po
of Malvina. And though he was fo
tant from her, yet he was ever with
faw her every where, without ever b
feparated from her. For as it is the
cefs of devotion to fee God in all thi
that of paffion, is to fee every thin
the perfon we love. He was no fo
apprifed of Mrs. Melmor's arrival
Edinburgh, than he haftened to inf
himfelf of what had paffed during
abfence at Burton Hall.

The old lady, after having acquainted him with her daughter's marriage, added ſome reproaches on his behaviour to her, accompanied with many particulars of Mrs. Burton's anger. But, continued ſhe, this violent paſſion ſoon found another object; and the miſconduct of my daughter, was a mere bagatelle, when compared with the indiſcretions of Madame de Sorcy. Indiſcretions of Madame de Sorcy, interrupted Sir Edmond, in a rage. How dare you ſay ſo?—What an infamous falſehood! Oh, dear me, replied Mrs. Melmor, this is no ſecret, every body will tell you the ſame. It was a ſad diſaſter. She was obliged to ſend away Mr. Prior.; and if it had not been for the great reſpect Mrs. Burton has for her own family, I do not know if her couſin would not have——.

At theſe words, Sir Edmond abruptly left her, aſſuring her, he did not believe one word of what ſhe had aſſerted. But

in

in going, he met Taſſe, in his
who being faithful to the orders
received, confirmed all that Mr
mor had been relating. He hea
in addition, that Mrs. Burton h
priſed Mr. Prior and Madame de
in a tender tête-à-tête. That
forbid Mr. Prior her houſe, an
ſeverely reprimanded the lady,
forgiven her, on her promiſing, a
paration, never more to ſee Mr.
but, that ſhe certainly conſoled
by writing to him. This is an un
ed fact, ſhe added, for I have a
taking one from her pocket, wh
been this inſtant delivered for h
which is from him, or I am mi
ceived.

Sir Edmond, almoſt annihila
what he had heard, and ſhocked
recollected Mr. Prior's hand wri
the ſuperſcription of the letter
vina. His mind became a prey

[redacted] ſuſpicion, and he began to credit [redacted] falſehood. The firſt effects of this diſcovery on Francic, at the idea of [redacted] to have been deceived by a woman; his [redacted] pride was wounded, and tearing her from [redacted] affections, he ſwore not to think of [redacted] her more, reſolved to make her feel [redacted] the full weight of his contempt, and convince [redacted] her that he no longer poſſeſſed any power [redacted] over his heart; and, that if he had [redacted] ſtill any thing to the contrary, it was [redacted] only from habit, and not from any particular preference.

Therefore, while he did not ſee her, [redacted] he maintained his anger: but the firſt look [redacted] he received from Malvina, his reſolution [redacted] failed, though he had the force to avoid [redacted] the opportunity of ſpeaking to her: alſo [redacted] the careſſes Mrs. Moody laviſhed on her [redacted] ſo fervedly, had affected him extremely; yet he ſtill perſiſted in his determination; when, on entering the ball-[redacted] room the inſtant he beheld Malvina,

he

he felt entirely subdued; and the ch
of this interesting woman affect
him like an electrical shock, and
herself, all the world was forgot
him.

But the repulsive coolness of h
ception, recalled his bewildered fe
and as soon as he had quitted her,
Melmor's information rushed to hi
mory, and caused him to repent h
so easily forgot his anger. He was
ashamed of his weakness, as it might
bably convince Malvina of the p
she yet had over him, and determin
extirpate such an idea from his min
pretended to have entirely lost th
membrance of the engagement h
made to call upon her; and the m
the country dances began, he i
diately passed before her, and offer
hand to Lady Mary, which she ea
accepted; and as they went to take
places, Sir Edmond looked at Ma

an air of triumph. But this had
the leaſt effect on her, and ſhe regard-
them with a look of cool indifference,
h entirely diſcouraged him; and in-
ly accepted the hand of a young
ch gentleman with whom ſhe had
converſing.

re figure, and particularly the grace
alvina, ſoon attracted the attention
l the ſpectators; and if her dignified
and modeſt deportment had not
red an awe, they would have re-
d her praiſes aloud. Lady Mary
herhill was ſoon deſerted; and
gh her ſelf-love was cruelly wound-
et, Sir Edmond was mortified be-
expreſſion. The ſuperiority which
ina diſplayed—when he wiſhed to
le her, ſhe triumphed; and in the
of ſuch unanimous applauſe, what
t could ſhe experience at his in-
ence.

Abſorbed

Abſorbed by ſuch thoughts, he did not hear one ſentence of what his partner ſaid to him; his ſenſations quite contrary, and his agitation increaſed ſo violently, that he wiſhed the country dances concluded a thouſand times. At this inſtant, the Marquis of Weymouth, a young man as much diſtinguiſhed by his wit and figure, as by his rank, came up to Lady Mary, and ſaid, with great agitation; in the name of Heaven, madam, can you inform me who that charming creature is? Is ſhe fallen from Heaven to enchant us all? Ah! if this is the fate ſhe has deſtined us; I feel that I have already ſubmitted to her empire; and am far from reſiſting it; I only deſire, to receive it from her.

Sir Edmond, who could not ſuppoſe the idea, that any perſon ſhould dare to have the hope of obtaining the heart of Malvina, replied to Lord Weymouth's enquiry, very dryly, by informing him that

hat Madame de Sorcy lived very re-ired; that this was her firſt appearance n public; and, that conſequently ſhe vould be very much diſtreſſed by the clat of ſuch a conqueſt as Lord Wey-nouth's.

You are particularly acquainted with her then? ſaid the Marquis. Yes, my ord; I have paſſed above two months with her in the country this winter. Ah! replied the Marquis, that is the worſt news I ever heard in my life; but it does not ſignify, I ſhall make the attempt. On ſaying this, he left them: Sir Ed-mond followed him with his eyes, and perceived him ſtop near Malvina, and appeared to addreſs a few words to her, which ſhe anſwered by a bow. He trem-bled, leſt he ſhould engage her to dance with him; for he was very ſenſible that the attentions of Lord Weymouth were much more likely to ſucceed than thoſe of Lord Stanhope; and he had the mor-

tification

tification to see them stand up for the next country dance.

From that moment, his agitation was so extreme, that he could not attend to his dancing; and yet, he had not the force to leave the spot where she was; though, but the moment before, he thought he could have renounced her for ever. He watched all her looks, and interpreted every action; and though he was subdued by her graces, yet, he could not pardon her for appearing amiable in the eyes of any other. A thousand times was he tempted to go to her and obtain her pardon, and the favor of a few moments conversation, that he might explain the motives of his conduct; but the fear of a refusal prevented him. For his pride had such an ascendency over him, that even the fear of losing Malvina, would not permit him to descend so far.

When

When the dance was concluded, he followed her to her place, and ſtood directly oppoſite to her, as if he wiſhed to prevent any perſon from coming near her. Whether Malvina had been accuſtomed to praiſe from her infancy, or whether ſhe was abſorbed by a different object, I cannot altogether determine; but it was certain, that ſhe had not heard any of the flattery which had been beſtowed upon her, and ſeemed to be quite ignorant of the admiration ſhe had inſpired. It was the firſt time that Sir Edmond had ever ſeen a woman inſenſible in ſuch an inſtance.

Notwithſtanding this had excited his utmoſt aſtoniſhment, yet, he did not doubt a moment of its ſincerity; for here was ſomething ſo natural and ingenuous in her countenance, that on ſeeing her, it was utterly impoſſible to have a doubt of her candor. She was very much offended at the conduct of

Sir Edmond, and determined to [illegible] it, by treating him (in future) with [illegible] moſt diſtant contempt; and collect[illegible] her fortitude, to conceal the pain [illegible] experienced from it: and ſhe ſo far ſu[illegible] ceeded, as to deceive every perſon [illegible]

But while all the women who [illegible] rounded her, were witneſſes of [illegible] power of her charms, and rather envi[illegible] her, Malvina was reflecting that if h[illegible] retirement appeared ſo inſupportable [illegible] Edinburgh, the world was infinite[illegible] more ſo, and ſhe had no reſource l[illegible] but to accept the kind invitation of M[illegible] St. Clare, and that as ſoon as poſſib[illegible] She had nearly determined upon t[illegible] plan, when Mrs. Burton intimated h[illegible] wiſh of retiring, and Malvina imm[illegible] diately aroſe to accompany her. [illegible] Lord Weymouth advanced, with the i[illegible] tention of offering his hand, Sir E[illegible] mond, who obſerved it, and who was a[illegible] maſter of himſelf; by a motion, as ſu[illegible] d

den as it was involuntary, ſeized the arm of Malvina, and placing it within his own—At leaſt, cried he, no perſon ſhall have this. No ſooner had theſe words eſcaped him, than ſhe was petrified at what he had both ſaid and acted. Malvina, who was equally ſurpriſed, went on irreſolutely, reflecting whether ſhe ought to go or leave him. They both remained ſilent, and found themſelves in a painful and diſtreſſing ſituation.

At the bottom of the ſtairs, they encountered the crowd, which obliged them to keep back a little, until the carriages could draw up. This circumſtance tended to render her ſituation more irkſome. In vain did they endeavour to forget the paſt, and to increaſe their diſtreſs—they might read it in each others looks. At laſt, Sir Edmond could no longer command the agitation he was under, and preſſing the hand which he held, he ſaid in a whiſper, ah! why,

why am I ever ſeparated from y
Malvina, who could not penetrate
meaning, and who only conſidered
as a continuation of his capricious
haviour, withdrew her hand with evi
diſdain, and turned her head aſide,
out making him any reply.

Sir Edmond, wounded by this
temptuous look, made no attempt to re
her hand; and only ſaid, your triu
has been complete this evening, mad
and every time you appear, you will
doubtedly gain new conqueſts. I
in a very ſhort time leave Edinbu
replied Malvina, and I do not inten
frequent any other entertainments. F
ſaid he, with eagerneſs, does not
Burton ſtay all the ſeaſon in this c
That I believe is her intention;
mine, is to leave it as ſoon as poſſi
And will you then return again to
gloomy mountains? No, replied M
vina, I ſhall not go to any diſtance.

Edm

mond ſaid it certainly would evince
leneſs in my enquiring any farther.
lvina, to avoid any more queſtions,
ed her paſſage through the crowd,
joined Mrs. Burton.

CHAP. X.

THE EXPLANATION INTERRUPTE

THE next mornin
vina finding herſelf alone at b
with her couſin, acquainted her
determination of leaving Edinbu
paſſing ſome time with Mrs. St
Ah, what has occaſioned you t
partial to that woman? ſaid Mrs. I
and from what unfortunate whi
that you do not like to remain wh
are? Malvina was that inſtant

anſwer, when Sir Edmond entered the room.

Lord Stafford and myſelf are come to breakfaſt with you, aunt, ſaid he to Mrs. Burton. But, before we ſeat ourſelves, he wiſhes to have a little converſation with you, and will attend you to your dreſſing-room. Malvina immediately roſe alſo to retire, but Mrs. Burton prevented her, that ſhe might hear more of her intention, by ſaying to her, you are not at liberty to leave us, for Lord Stanhope intends to give a ſuperb entertainment; and it will be utterly impoſſible for you to avoid making your appearance there. I aſſure you, madam, replied Malvina, you muſt diſpenſe with my compliance, and, if you knew how little pleaſure they afford me, you would not preſs it any farther.

Did ever any one hear of ſuch caprice? exclaimed Mrs. Burton, and addreſſing

Sir Edmond—As I ſuppoſe you muſt
remarked, as well as myſelf, the
particular attentions which my
Stanhope has paid my couſin; an
the frequent hints he has given me,
almoſt ſure, that he would not d
if he did not mean to become ſeri
and you know what a very honor
alliance it would be to our family.
inſtead of being flattered by it, an
deavouring to ſecure ſuch a conq
by appearing at an entertainment, w
is given entirely on her account, ſh
ſo ridiculous and obſtinate as to
all my entreaties, and is determine
depart: and who do you think ſh
going to? Why, no other than
eccentric and vulgar woman, Mrs
Clare.

Mrs. St. Clare, repeated Sir Edm
with an expreſſion of ſorrow, whic
could not diſguiſe. It is to Mrs
Clare then that you are going? an
inti

intimate with her? No, replied Malvina, I know very little of her, but her character pleaſes me. Beſides, it is not neceſſary, was it otherwiſe, that her ſociety ſhould be ſo very pleaſing, to be in my opinion preferable to all the amuſements which I find here. I obſerve, added Mrs. Burton, with viſible ill-humour, all the reaſons which I have pointed out, have not the leaſt weight with you.

If it was poſſible for me to believe they had the ſlighteſt foundation, ſaid Malvina, that would be a ſtill more powerful inducement for my abſence. What, exclaimed Mrs. Burton, the idea of ſecuring the affections of Lord Stanhope, of making him your own, and being called by his name. Does not your ſoul aſpire to ſuch a hope? I have not the leaſt ambition, replied Malvina; and if I was at liberty to make a choice, it would not be a title that could gain

my preference. But as I have devoted my days to the child of my friend, the only wish I had formed, is the power of fulfilling that duty at a diſtance from the world, and from men.

I have not any patience with you, ſaid Mrs. Burton, nor this affectation of ſingularity, which, to me appears deſpicable: but as I muſt attend Lord Stafford, I ſhall leave you with Sir Edmund, and hope he will endeavour to point out the abſurdity of ſuch romantic fancies, and delicate refinement, which you carry too far. I charge him to undertake this office, and ſhall be very happy if he can ſucceed: on ſaying this, ſhe left the room.

I do not think, ſaid Malvina, as ſoon as they were alone, that you will believe yourſelf entitled to ſpeak to me on ſuch a ſubject, particularly as it would be uſeleſs. For characters, which are

[redacted] from our own, can never reconcile us to their opinion, or understand us on any point. Not on any, replied Sir Edmond, looking at her steadily —Alas, there was a moment when I once believed your thought otherwise. At these words, Malvina blushed so deep, but he was convinced that she understood him; and drawing near to her, he added, I had determined to refuse the hand of Lady Mary Summerhill, in contradiction to all the solicitations of my family; when a union, which was not congenial to my heart, appeared to me the most heavy of all chains. I have an detested marriages of convenience, and I believe you will allow that we think alike on this subject. But there are others much nearer and dearer to

Is it possible, said Malvina, that you can refused the hand of Lady Mary? Gracious Heaven, what will Mrs. Bur-

ton think who came to Edinburgh on purpose to see the marriage celebrated? And do you seriously believe it, said Sir Edmond, with apparent anxiety? Why should I doubt it, replied Malvina, blushing, when there are so many reasons to confirm it. But, replied he, perhaps on this subject, there are a thousand reasons to persuade; but one only which is sufficient to destroy it.

Malvina, who felt much distressed at the turn which the conversation had taken, got up with the intention of retiring; when Sir Edmond, taking both her hands, said with uncommon animation, Ah! I conjure, I entreat you will not leave me? Hear me only for one moment! and when you have heard the confession of my faults, grant me your pity, for the torments which I have endured, and do not refuse to hear me explain the infamous accusation which they have dared to fully you with. Oh! good

good God! exclaimed Malvina, ſhocked at what ſhe had heard—I did not imagine that any thing concerning me could give you uneaſineſs, or that any one ſhould trouble you with my concerns.

All—every thing reminds me of you, cried he, with energy, in the world, as well as in retirement. The idea of you accompanies me every where; my eyes are ever in ſearch of a reſemblance to the form of her I love; and the whole univerſe appears to be animated by that ſenſation, which abſorbs my heart. Oh! pardon me, continued he, on perceiving that ſhe had turned from him, to hide her face with her hand—this confeſſion cannot offend you; never was there one more true, or involuntary. I do not, cannot reſiſt the peculiar aſcendency which you have over me; it fruſtrates all my intentions, and diſſipates all my ſuſpicions, and forces the truth from my heart.

Beloved,

Beloved, and revered Malvina; ſlander has dared to let its voice be heard againſt you; and the being who is now before you, confeſſes he alſo has encouraged a doubt that was injurious to you: but Heaven can witneſs, from the moment I again beheld you, it has been obliterated; and I ſhould bluſh to explain it to you. Should not ſuch purity as Malvina's have expreſſed a deſire to be acquainted with what he alluded to? But ſhe had no occaſion to vindicate herſelf; for the innocence and candor of her countenance was an emblem of her heart.

At this moment, Mrs. Fenwick entered in her uſual giddy manner, and preſented Malvina a letter, which had been juſt received. A flaſh of lightning could not have had a more inſtantaneous and powerful effect, than the ſight of the hand writing had on Sir Edmond. It was from Mr. Prior—from that man whom Malvina honored with her friend-

ſhip,

ſhip, in oppoſition to her couſin, and the cenſure of the world. Incenſed at this apparent obſtinacy, he could not attribute it to any thing but the moſt deteſtable motives. The deſire of revenge was again kindled, and while his boſom was torn by rage, for the gratification of the moment, he went up to Mrs. Fenwick, and uttered in a voice loud enough to be heard, the moſt tender and flattering ſentiments he could think of.

Malvina was leaning with her head ſupported by her hand, pretending to read, but rather ſhocked at the impaſſioned looks of Sir Edmond, ſhe liſtened with inconceiveable aſtoniſhment to his converſation with Mrs. Fenwick, and the extreme ſurpriſe it occaſioned, preſſed the pain ſhe would otherwiſe have felt from it. Such unparalleled licentiouſneſs appeared to her beyond all belief: ſhe ſaw, but could not comprehend it, and was quite overcome,

without

without the power of [illegible]
it.

Sir Edmond, who obſerved the di
ditation in which ſhe appeared to be
ed, and attributing it to the letter
ſhe had in her hand, his rage inc
at Malvina's reverie, and was dete
to excite her attention, at the ri
offending her; and continued his p
marks of preference to Mrs. Fe
But the more his animation inc
the more abſorbed Malvina becam
while ſhe was ſuppoſed to be think
another, ſhe was at a loſs for id
underſtand what ſhe witneſſed.

Mrs. Melmor and Mrs. Fenwick
alternately going out of the roo
returning inſtantly; yet nothing
rouſe Malvina's attention, whic
tinued ſo long, that it appeared ſin
and Sir Edmond, who could not
prevent himſelf from endeavouri

[redacted] ideas, took the opportunity (when he thought no one observed him) to lean over the back of Malvina's chair, saying that letter appears to have claimed all your attention. Gracious Heaven, exclaimed Malvina, as if she had been just awakened from a deep sleep—you have reminded me that I have it, for I had entirely forgot it.

Sir Edmond then observed that the letter had never been opened; and he continued, Ah! who was the happy, the fortunate being, which so entirely occupied your attention? I was struck, replied she, looking at him, in contemplating; for I cannot account for the prodigy, a falsehood the most uniform, united with frankness and candor, and all the energy of sentiment, to the most contemptible licentiousness. I have been reflecting upon this unheard of medley of contrarieties; the incomprehensible assemblage of which confounded all my ideas.

ideas. Ah, madam, replied Sir [illegible] mournfully, how much [illegible] make me suffer for the injury I have [illegible] guilty of towards you. I do not in tend to accuse or punish you, she repli disdainfully. You do not think me wo thy your anger; yet, if I had but the portunity of explaining myself, and motives——.

I can dispense with both, interrupt Malvina; I have not the least curios to be acquainted with them, as what have seen is quite sufficient; and fr this moment I relinquish the idea of e comprehending you. On saying this, I quitted the room, and returned to h chamber.

The moment she was alone, she bu into tears. The more energy Sir E mond had used in his expressions to h the less could she pardon him for havi counterfeited it; and even supposing h

he had not deceived her, and that his behaviour had been the effect of thoughtleſſneſs, ſhe felt, that from henceforth it would be impoſſible to place the leaſt confidence in a man whoſe ſentiments could change every moment; and perhaps the moſt painful feeling which her heart could reproach him with, was, that he had placed it out of her power ever to believe any of his proteſtations.

Nevertheleſs mortified at a prepoſſeſſion, whoſe reality ſhe could not conceal, ſhe confeſſed, that all the vices of Sir Edmond could not diminiſh this, ſo much as the ſight of him augmented her partiality; therefore, to exclude it for ever, it was neceſſary that ſhe ſhould abſent herſelf from his company. She then fixed her determination to ſet out for St. Clare-Hall, in two days, whatever might be Mrs. Burton's remonſtrances againſt it. In the evening, when ſhe retired to her chamber, ſhe found a letter on her table,

table, the hand-writing of which was perfectly unknown to her. Calling Watkins, she enquired of her, from whom it came? She replied, that a ſtranger had brought it, and charged her to deliver it herſelf—to her miſtreſs.

Malvina, at a loſs to gueſs at the author; and before ſhe opened it, looked at the ſeal, but there was no cypher on it—when ſhe had, before peruſing the contents ſhe ſaw, at the concluſion of the fourth page, the ſignature of Edward Burton. She felt her cheeks glow, and her heart was uncommonly agitated. Not certain whether ſhe ought to read it, after ſhe had run over the firſt page, and nearly got to the end of the letter, before ſhe had concluded to peruſe it.

CHAP. XI.

Sir Edmond Burton to Madame de Sorcy.

"YOU left me overwhelmed by your indignation, and truly touched from my repentance. Words are inadequate to express what I have suffered from that moment. The new existence which I have derived from you is too novel for me to describe.—Till this day I was ignorant that there were pains and pleasures almost above human strength to support. It is certainly only yourself who can occasion me to feel the

first,

firſt, and conceive the hope of the la
But my vices and your ſeverity le
this hope daily.—This hope, which
become my greateſt puniſhment f
having had the temerity to encourag
and then finding it vaniſhed as an
phantom.

" May I be permitted to inform
that it was the violence of my paſ
which has rendered me guilty. Oh! M
vina, muſt I then relinquiſh this f
hope? Do not imagine, that from
being ſo ſolicitous of gaining your
fection, that I believed myſelf worth
ſuch a bleſſing? But if the being a
be deſerving—who is to obtain ſuch a
licity?—What mortal can have the
ſumption to aſpire to you? Oh! Malv
I am but too ſenſible of all that
poſſeſs. I behold myſelf—and then
diſtance between us is immenſe. B
love you, and this word brings me
to you. Deign to guide me—m

a new creature, that I may unite all that can pleaſe you. There are no efforts which I would attempt, nor any proofs which I would not undergo to deſerve you.

"My errors are innumerable I acknowledge—many guilty flames have profaned my heart; but the image of Malvina has purified it.—Will ſhe then deign to accept that heart which is excluſively entirely her own? from that moment it may become more worthy of her acceptance, by humbly endeavouring to imitate her.

"One word from Malvina will perform wonders—ſhe can transform my vices into virtues. I could do any thing by her commands—yes, every thing, except ceaſing to love her. Oh! Malvina, moſt amiable, moſt adored of women, do not reject my vows, but believe that ſuch a paſſion as mine, with you for its object,

is

is infinitely more capable of exer
and heroiſm than all thoſe men wh
only coolly virtuous. Ah, Malv
pardon a being who had the teme
before he had acquired the leaſt
over your heart, for daring to be jea
But the idea of Mr. Prior, of that
for whom you have preſerved ſo te
and unalterable a friendſhip, purſues
torments me. It is already too muc
ſupport the idea of being indifferen
you; but to ſee another preferred, is
ture. The ſuppoſition alone render
furious, and I am uncertain to
lengths revenge might force me.

" Malvina, you poſſeſs much ſ
bility, and that ſenſibility is laviſhe
another. Ah! what intolerable ago
has this occaſioned my heart. Ma
hope to obtain my pardon from the
tle, the generous Malvina. But let
ſoothe my torments, with the conſo
idea, that perhaps the tender ſentim

dy will overcome her anger. If I d but deſcribe (but that would be ſſible) all I have ſuffered from what Melmor acquainted me with re- e to Mr. Prior's being diſmiſſed from on-Hall, on account of his affection you; and alſo, that it was returned Malvina. Gracious God! could I have believed this?

'Oh! Malvina, on the evening of my arture, when I could not longer con- l what I felt, and I dared to let you ceive the pain your intimacy with him afioned me, did you not anſwer me manner and with a voice which al- s penetrates my ſoul? and which you ne are capable of, in words which are graven on my heart—'Ah! I do not h to afflict you.' This was ſufficient to clude for ever all that the inſinuations calumny could ſully you with. But, lvina, are we always juſt, and cool,

when we are ſeverely affected by
neareſt and deareſt to the heart
Malvina, the penitent Edmond c
deſerve your forgiveneſs, and
worthy of you, by the remorſe w
ſuffers—If you knew the promiſe
betrayed. But the paſt ſeems to
hilated from my exiſtence; and
begin to live ſince I have kno
loved Malvina.

" You have enlightened my da
changed every thing around me.
I have called pleaſure and love,
feel did not deſerve the name;
mind is exalted and enlarged ſince
tunate moment that my heart has
temerity to aſpire to ſo ſuperior
can I then dare to ſuſpect ſuch a
Oh! Malvina, whatever may
crimes, and the injuſtice I may ha
guilty of towards you, you ſhall
quainted with every thing.

' You muſt know, that when I at laſt
e credit to Mrs. Melmor's informa-
, I determined to renounce you for
r—that I even endeavoured to hate
; and I ſhould have had a ſecret
ſure in your knowing it, if I thought
ould have given you pain. But, on
r appearance, all my reſolutions va-
ed, and my love ſeemed to increaſe
m the ſacrifices which I impoſed on
ſelf.—And I had only to behold Mal-
a—to believe her innocent. But this
rning, when I beheld that fatal letter,
eemed to freeze all the ardor of my
l, and I was no longer maſter of my-
: I had recourſe to a blind and fooliſh
enge to allay my torments, which has
r terminated in deſpair.

At ſuch a moment, how deſpicable
I appear in not making a diſtinction
veen Malvina and all the reſt of her

To have the vanity to think I could
d her, by affecting to appear gay and

frivolous with another woman. A
what have I gained by this painfu
ſimulation? an anſwer, which, ſeve
it was, was infinitely leſs painful
your contempt; and the look with w
it was accompanied—Malvina hate
deſpiſes me.

"Malvina, perhaps, believes th
have deceived her, and therefore th
me unworthy of her notice.—She d
and flies me; yet I have no rig
complain, as I have undoubtedly
ſerved it.—But at leaſt do not doul
affection—my love is my only co
tion, and my only merit, for by t
ſhall live in hopes of ſoftening her,
alone can make me attach any va
my exiſtence.

"EDMOND BUR

When Malvina had finiſhed re
this letter, ſhe, for ſome moments
herſelf up to the moſt pleaſing id

and ſhe imagined, that if Sir Edmond could once experience a perfect deteſtation for his former pleaſures, he might for ever renounce all thoſe pernicious errors which had ſo long led him in the dowery paths of vice. That perhaps, in her account, he might as it were begin to live; and the purſuit of virtue would conſtitute his happineſs. She eaſily pardoned him for the caprices his jealouſy had occaſioned.

Oh! what infinite pleaſure would it give me, ſaid ſhe, if I could be inſtrumental in ſaving ſuch a mind from vice; retrain thoſe paſſions which are now ſo violent, to goodneſs and purity, by that tender and delicate ſentiment which conſtantly leads to the practice of every virtue. And it is really myſelf who am, it appears, called upon to undertake and accompliſh the glorious taſk which is to be rewarded by the love of Edmund. And dare I deliver myſelf up,

without bluſhing, to the ſentiments w
force me onward, and triumphs
me, in oppoſition to myſelf, and wl
till this moment, has produced
ſorrow and remorſe?

O God! why, alas, cannot I free
ſelf from it? But my ſoul ſeems
to the remembrance of its duty,
its vows. Clara, my beloved fri
thou ſhouldſt not have confided
daughter to a woman who could ſu
to a tyrannic paſſion. At this mo
I recollect, with terror, when delive
her into my arms, thou ſaidſt, be
her mother, Malvina; let her always
with you, a ſtranger to any other au
rity. Ah! I may impoſe a ſevere dut
you, but it is not from ſuch a on
Malvina that I exact a common ſacri
Clara, I will keep this promiſe, I
reject every connection which
in the leaſt invade its rights, dep
m- of my independence, or divide
he

eart. I will ſuppreſs the intruſion of very pleaſing idea.

Oh! Edmond, at the moment when you ve ſhewn yourſelf moſt deſerving my eem, muſt I bid you adieu for ever? it if I wiſhed to avoid you, when I ught you perfidious and inconſtant, w much more urgent are the reaſons my flying from you at this moment, en I have proved your affection and cerity. It was infinitely more eaſy to ift it before this confirmation of your derneſs. But now—Ah! I will depart, hout loſing a moment; and be parti- arly careful to conceal this ſecret from , which would only add to my grief I betray my weakneſs.

. . . . . .

Malvina therefore reſolved to ſet out St. Clare-Hall, the following day, out ſeeing Sir Edmond, devoting ſelf a victim to a faſtidious delicacy, ch her friend would have been the

laſt to require her adhering t
ſuch circumſtances. But ſhe im
was the dictates of duty; and
idea, her determination was inv

Thoſe who imagine they hav
rity to condemn Malvina, oug
member ſuch an example does
quently occur, and ſeldom exi
minds that poſſeſs the moſt exa
ments of virtue.

CHAP. XII.

THE SURPRISE.

ON the following morning, on hearing Sir Edmond was below, ſhe ſtaid in her room longer than uſual; and was preparing to go down, when ſhe heard him bidding Mrs. Burton good-day—and immediately the latter entered Malvina's apartment, with her countenance inflamed, and every feature diſtorted by rage.

I was ignorant, ſaid ſhe, to w
ſhould attribute the ſingular behav
Sir Edmond; but if, what Mrs. H
has acquainted me with is true,
diſobedience is the effect of your
I ſhall never ceaſe to regret hav
ceived you in my houſe—I who
my arms to welcome an ungrateful r
who ever ſince ſhe has been here
deavoured to diſtreſs and afflict m
moſt unkind manner, and who,
has given the finiſhing ſtroke
whole, by engaging my nephew
fuſe the honorable eſtabliſhments
I had gained for him.

It is unfortunate, extremely u
nate for me, who have been fla
myſelf with the hopes of ſuch a n
liance; and when I had exerted
means for its accompliſhment, to
my projects vaniſh, by the infin
of a woman, who, under the appe
of candor, uſes all the arts of coq

Oh! good God, madam, exclaimed Malvina—of what is it that I am accuſed? that you have thus loaded me with ſuch a torrent of reproaches, before you know whether I have deſerved them?

Do not imagine that you can deceive me alſo? replied Mrs. Burton, with vehemence—I know you now, and all your intrigues are diſcovered. It was not ſufficient to attach Mr. Prior by your wiles, but Edmond muſt alſo feel them.

It was very plain to be ſeen at the ball that you particularly endeavoured to eclipſe Lady Mary Summerhill; and it was obſerved yeſterday morning, that by an affected reverie, and ſentence only half articulated, with a peculiar expreſſion of countenance, that you attempted to inſpire Sir Edmond with that ſpirit of diſobedience which he has juſt now manifeſted.

All the preliminaries were ſettled, and Lord Stafford was on the point of obtaining the title for me, which I have ſo much deſired. Lady Mary was ready to give her conſent; accordingly I intreated Sir Edmond to attend me this morning in my cloſet, and informed him what had been concluded; and alſo that he was expected to perform his promiſe. Inſtead of the eagerneſs which I expected he would anſwer me with, he rejected all my propoſals, and abſolutely refuſed the hand of her ladyſhip.

I cannot love her, he replied, and therefore it would be ſacrilege to form a union when the heart is not intereſted. How ridiculous to hear him talk of love, who has ever made a jeſt of ſuch a ſentiment, to think of ſacrificing ſuch a glorious and honorable alliance for this ſentiment; and any one may obſerve, from this inſtance only, that he had been influenced

fluenced by a romantic woman, who only yeſterday deſpiſed, with an air of indifference, the marked attention of ſuch a man as Lord Stanhope. But it is of no conſequence, ſhe continued (without giving Malvina an opportunity of ſpeaking) who has inſtigated him to this; if I fail in my projects, I ſhall ſucceed in my revenge. From this moment I ſhall give that fortune to another which I have hitherto always reſerved for him. As to you, madam, you ſhall leave this houſe; for all the civilities I have ſhewn you, I have been recompenſed by your having occaſioned confuſion, ſorrow, and diſobedience.

I had determined to ſet off to-morrow, replied Malvina, calmly; my plan has been uniform, and whatever may have been the civilities you allude to, the moment of my departure will be the moſt agreeable of any I have paſſed with you. Yet, if I do not condeſcend to vindicate

myſelf

myſelf from the ſlander which has
maliciouſly circulated concerning
the intereſt of Sir Edmond ſo far
gages me, that I ſolemnly declare
my intention of leaving this place is n
to ſee him more.

Thus, madam, if the ſentiments
ſuſpect he poſſeſſes, and which has
dered him culpable in your opinion,
moment he has loſt the object,
ought to renounce the puniſhment.

Yes, madam, replied Mrs. Burton
garding her with a look of anger) a
was leaving the room, I ſee very cle
by your readineſs in defending him,
your careleſſneſs in what regards y
own juſtification, how very dear he i
you; and alſo, how certain you ar
your power over him. But do not i
gine your triumph is complete; the t
may even reach him, and knowing w
you are, he will eſtimate you acc
ingly. Al

Alas! ſaid Malvina, as ſoon as ſhe was relieved from her preſence, what evil is it that ſhe wiſhes me? Is it not ſufficient that I have for ever renounced Sir Edmond? But muſt ſhe endeavour to deprive me of his eſteem; and may ſhe not very eaſily ſucceed in that attempt? In my abſence he will be ſurrounded by thoſe who are my enemies—who will meditate my ruin—who will then vindicate me. His heart will no longer anſwer mine, and he will no longer believe that virtue.

Oh! cruel Mrs. Burton, why have I ever known you?—and what can I have done to excite ſuch invincible hatred?—What ſhe had done, was to be her ſuperior in every thing. She was as conſpicuous in her figure, as her mind was exalted, and no other was noticed when near her; and this was entirely the effect of that genuine ſimplicity and unaffuming modeſty, that ſhe paid no attention

tention to the praiſes ſhe received, deſpiſed ſuch empty diſtinctions, f perſons whom ſhe could not eſte This viſible ſuperiority Mrs. Burton ſo conſcious of; and from being fo to treat her as ſhe deſerved, ſhe felt hatred to Malvina increaſe, without poſſibility of finding any thing to bl her for, with juſtice.

Without perfectly comprehending reaſon, Mrs. Fenwick had conceive inſtinctive diſlike to Malvina; ſhe ſou every occaſion to ſpeak againſt her, was encouraged in it by the advice of huſband. They had both determi for ſome time to ruin Malvina if p ſible, and alſo Sir Edmond, in the o nion of Mrs. Burton; at leaſt ſufficien to deprive him of her fortune, and h confidence. By ſuch artifices, they h gained an aſcendency in the houſe; a guided by his advice, Mrs. Fenwick h prevailed on Mrs. Burton to ſend aw

Malvin

vina, hoping by this means, in a
t time, to gain as much influence
her, with reſpect to the deſtiny of
Edmond, that he might ſeverely re-
the having abandoned her.

hile all theſe plans were projecting,
vina was preparing for her departure,
gh undetermined where ſhe ſhould
er reſidence; but retained her firſt
ation of viſiting Mrs. St. Clare, and
n there, reflect what would be moſt
ble for her future deſtination.

ie did not make her appearance at
er, but as ſoon as ſhe heard all the
y were ſet out for the play, ſhe went
n to the garden. It was large and
ary. She ſought the moſt retired
, that ſhe might indulge the melan-
y reflections which her ſituation pro-
ed. But notwithſtanding all her en-
vours, the idea of Sir Edmond would
ude on her thoughts. She wept on
their

their approaching ſeparation, and ſighed with regret, when ſhe imagined how bitterly he would reproach her, on hearing of her departure. Taking his letter from her boſom, and bathing it with her tears, ſhe ſaid, Ah! it did not deſerve ſuch an anſwer as ſilence and neglect; but whatever may be the ill opinion he may have of me in future, on my appearing inſenſible and ſevere, I ſhall at leaſt not have deſerved it.

Oh! Sir Edmond, continued ſhe, holding her handkerchief to her eyes, and reſting her head againſt a tree; could you but read my heart: but I ſhould rather ſay, why cannot I conceal from myſelf the diſtreſſing conflicts I have endured in order to forget you. Juſt as ſhe had finiſhed theſe words, a ſlight noiſe made her ſtart, and turning to obſerve what had occaſioned it, ſhe perceived Sir Edmond at her feet. The unexpected ſight of him occaſioned her

to

o utter a faint cry; and alarmed alſo, at he idea that he might have overheard er, ſhe wiſhed to fly from his preſence. ut the firſt ſtep ſhe advanced, Sir Edmond's letter fell, and on ſtooping to ake it up, the wind blew it towards him, e caught it, and returning it to her, he found it was ſtill wet with her tears. Oh, God! he exclaimed, is this an illuſion? Is this Malvina whom I behold, and is it her whom I have heard? Is it Malvina who poſſeſſes ſenſibility? Malvina, who really loves? What unexpected happineſs! for the object of her preference, who is now before her. On uttering this, he ſurveyed her with that look of eloquent ſilence, which infinitely more than words expreſſed the exceſs of his felicity.

Ah, I am ruined, interrupted Malvina! half terrified; where ſhall I fly? Where hide my weakneſs? Ah, what do I hear? exclaimed Sir Edmond, with impetuoſity. Fly me, hide yourſelf.—Can I believe it poſſible?

poſſible? I who adore you! when
love me, what power on earth ſhall
you from me? Before I had an id
your tender ſenſibility, I would
contended for you with the whole
verſe; and now thy heart acknowl
its attachment, when I have hear
confeſſion from your own lips, in c
ſition to yourſelf, the ſweet ſenſa
I experience, confirms me we are
tined for each other.

No, Malvina, from henceforth
are mine; I am interwoven in
deſtiny; I muſt in future tread in
path of life; I will never leave you a
Fly, if you wiſh it, to the end of
world, there alſo will you find m
ſhall follow you every where, claim
every where, and you will behold
at your feet, as I am now, loving
to madneſs. But Malvina loves
Malvina is mine: ſaying this, while
his knees before her, he folded his
r

round her with the moſt profound reſpect; and though in this delirium, he only dared preſs his lips to her robe, from an inſtinctive delicacy, which proved beyond all he could have uttered, that he now loved for the firſt time in his life; as it was a degree of reſpectful awe he had never before felt.

Malvina wept, but continued ſilent. What could ſhe ſay? What more could ſhe add? Sir Edmond had inadvertently heard the confeſſion of her affection, without her wiſh or knowledge. She was now certain of his adoration, and his paſſionate determination of never leaving her, though ſhe bluſhed to have her ſecret known, yet ſhe could not wiſh to recall it.

Sir Edmond, intoxicated with the pleaſure of an attachment which had always been ſo dear to him, and folding the object in his arms, certain of being beloved.

He

He was now enjoying a few of thoſe moments which afforded the ſweeteſt and moſt refined pleaſure, and which are ſo ſeldom ever realized in the courſe of our exiſtence. He was aſtoniſhed at finding his eyes bathed with tears, when he was ſo happy; and for the firſt time in his life, found they were produced by the effect of thoſe exquiſite ſenſations which he never had an idea of; and preſſing Malvina's hand to his heart, exclaimed, Ah! I now am convinced, that if there are a thouſand pleaſures in life, there is but one kind of happineſs; as that which I feel at this moment is ſo pure and tranſporting, that perhaps it is not even in your power to augment it. Oh, my beloved Malvina, condeſcend to determine my fate, and by conſenting to unite your deſtiny with mine, confirm that confeſſion, which my love dares not again intreat from your delicacy.

Malvina was confounded by this ſudden propoſal, which her heart perhaps accorded with, though it appeared irreconcileable with her duty. She was heſitating for an anſwer, when ſhe heard ſomebody cough near them, and ſhe was certain it was Mr. Fenwick. This immediately recalled her to the world, which ſhe had forgot. She then recollected with terror, that ſhe was in the gloom of the ſhrubbery, and almoſt in the arms of Sir Edmond. Leave me, ſhe exclaimed, I have been here too long, and my inexcuſeable imprudence will authoriſe all their malicious ſuſpicions; complete their triumph; and perhaps, embitter the reſt of my life.

Why, interrupted Sir Edmond, with quickneſs, will you value the opinion of a ridiculous and misjudging world, which can never underſtand your character or your actions? I who love you only, wiſh to live for you alone. Of

what

what conſequence is their idle malice? Oh, Malvina, before Heaven, who can behold and judge our intentions; Oh, ſay that this beloved hand ſhall be mine; and then let the ſtorm rage—it cannot affect you.

Ah! exclaimed Malvina, hurrying towards the houſe; in the diſtreſs my mind is in at this moment, you muſt not exact any promiſe from me? I am not perfectly my own miſtreſs; for does not the child of my Clara claim all my attention? Did I not on the death of my friend, give her my ſolemn promiſe never to engage myſelf? Yes, Sir Edmond, let me fly, and endeavour to forget you, that I may not have to accuſe the memory of that beloved friend, as being the only obſtacle which ſeparates me from you.

Deareſt Malvina, ſaid Sir Edmond, ſtopping her againſt her inclination, muſt ſuch conſiderations always

rule

rule over every other? But love will
usurp its power, and overthrow ſuch
reaſons, and even ſoften Malvina. Why
will you leave me? You wiſh to depart
to-morrow; and you muſt go to Mrs.
St. Clare's, to that Mrs. St. Clare's, whoſe
doors are for ever cloſed againſt me. In
the name of Heaven change an intention
which will drive me to deſpair! But
what is it that you require, replied Mal-
vina, violently agitated (and attempting
to go forward) I really cannot ſtay here
any longer, I will not ſtay another
day with Mrs. Burton; and at preſent
I have not any other aſylum but Mrs.
St. Clare's houſe; ſhe is the only woman
that I know.

Well, Malvina, replied he, I do not
wiſh to oppoſe your deſign, and however
miſerable your abſence will make me, if
you can be at peace, I will not murmur. But
grant that I may at leaſt be permitted to
ſee you once more, that I may anticipate

all the wiſhes of your heart, and in
you of all that agitates my own.
you conſent to ſtop a few hours to-
row at Falkirk? where I will meet
There I can explain myſelf with more
priety, diſſipate all your doubts, and
niſh your ſcruples; and when I leave yo
may it be with the flattering hope th
it will not be for ever.

Do not refuſe me? he added in a co
manding tone; and detaining her
ſecond time, fearing an interruption
the voices which they heard at a li
diſtance; for if you deny me ſo ſimpl
requeſt, I declare that I will not be ſ
miſſive, but employ force, and e
violent means to ſee you. But what
I ſay? Malvina, pardon me, I am wi
I will relinquiſh theſe raſh intentio
you are at liberty, and I ſubmit.
if my happineſs is dear to you, do
pronounce a refuſal, which I will
ſurvive.

Malvi

Malvina, trembling, alarmed, and overcome by ſolicitations which were congenial to her heart, promiſed Sir Edmond to wait for him the next day at Falkirk; and then flying from him with the rapidity of an arrow, ſhe paſſed Mrs. Burton and Mrs. Fenwick on the ſtairs, who were going up with Lord Weymouth, without either ſaluting or ſeeing them.

CHAP. XIII.

A DUEL.

THE ladies, aſtoniſhed at this ſudden appearance, were at a loſs to account for the cauſe; when, about a quarter of an hour after, they ſaw Mr. Fenwick enter pale and agitated. He had met Sir Edmond in the garden, who, ſurmiſing that he might make ſome malignant reports, injurious to the peace of Malvina, ſeized him by the arm, declaring

ring on his honor, that if he ſuggeſted the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion, or uttered one word againſt Madame de Sorcy, he ſhould feel the ſevereſt marks of his reſentment. Mr. Fenwick, terrified at ſuch a threat, very readily promiſed to be ſilent, that he might be relieved from the preſence of Sir Edmond, whoſe very looks made him tremble.

In vain did Mrs. Burton and his wife queſtion him on the cauſe of his agitation. He was yet under the dominion of his fears, much more than a regard to his promiſe, therefore, he would not let a word tranſpire while Sir Edmond was in the houſe. He ſoon after heard him talking below, and the houſe door being faſtened for the night, the ſervants were intreating him to go up to their miſtreſs. Mrs. Burton, ever ſuſpicious, immediately went to the ſtaircaſe, and elevating her voice, ſhe ſaid, by what chance is it Sir Edmond, that you are

here at this late hour? What could have induced you to come here while I was abſent, and afterwards leave the houſe without wiſhing to ſee me? Take care you do not accuſe me of any indiſcretion, ſaid Mr. Fenwick, running haſtily to the ſtairs, for theſe ladies can witneſs that I have never mentioned one word of what paſſed between us.

And for your own ſake, I hope you will continue to be ſilent, ſaid Sir Edmond, coming up ſtairs, and giving him a furious look. What myſtery is all this? aſked Mrs. Burton. What has paſſed between you? And what right has Sir Edmond to threaten, or give laws to any perſon in my houſe? You ſhall hear all, cried Mrs. Fenwick, going up to her, followed by Lord Weymouth—I will inform you, dear Mrs. Burton, of all I have learnt from Jenny, which accounts for the diſtreſs of Madame de Sorcy, and the anger of Sir Edmond.

They

were ſeen both together in the
Mr. Fenwick went to walk there
d he was ſo unfortunate as to in-
a charming tête à-tête. Ah!
flaſh of conviction burſts upon
d Mrs. Burton; I can no longer
out that my unworthy relation has
red my houſe, and I will this
go and——

cried Sir Edmond, retaining her
:, no perſon here will have the
to diſturb that lady, or even
breathe a ſuſpicion that can
er fame. What is the meaning
inſolence, ſaid Mrs. Burton,
ng with rage, and endeavouring
rom him? Is it proper in you to
prevent me from going where
in my own houſe? Let me paſs,
me go and ſend away her
your ſhameful licentiouſneſs has
aged to ſuch audacity. Neither
any one elſe are worthy of her
replied Sir Edmond. Know,

that while the breath of life animates
bosom, I will defend her from your fu
ness, and render the rage of malice in
tent.

Will you, Lord Weymouth, permi
woman to be treated thus in your p
sence? said Mrs. Burton, addressing h
self to him; will you not release me fi
the hands of a madman? Do not
vance a step, my lord, exclaimed
Edmond, on your life do not, or
shall repent it. I never yet put up wi
threat, replied Lord Weymouth, hau
tily, and I am not in a disposition
slumber over your's.

I am ready to support it, replied
Edmond, drawing his sword with
hand, and holding Mrs. Burton with
other; happy to have the opportunit
fighting with a man that he conside
rather as a rival. Lord Weymouth part
the stroke of his adversary, and g
anot

another in his turn; while the reſt, terrified, were ſilently gazing at this dreadful ſcene; when the room door was ſuddenly opened, and Malvina ruſhed in pale and diſordered, and threw herſelf between the combatants.

"Stop, ſaid ſhe, wildly, it ſhall never be ſaid that blood was ſhed on my account; Oh! ſave me from ſuch a horrible idea? But if my ſorrows, my tears, cannot reſtrain you, let me fall the firſt by your hands?" On ſaying this, ſhe advanced before Sir Edmond, and to defend him, preſented herſelf to the ſword of Lord Weymouth, who, ſtruck with her courage, and alſo ſurpriſed at the action, was overcome by that beauty which the agitation and diſtreſs of her mind had rendered ſtill more intereſting. He inſtantly threw down his ſword at her feet, ſaying, "Ah, madam, who can reſiſt you, who can behold you, and not obey? It is in your power to calm rage, command

the paſſions, and attract the love and ad
miration of every one.

Malvina, ſaid Sir Edmond, with
mixture of jealouſy and tenderneſs,
this your place? — Ought you to
phane your angelic purity, by co
near beings who wiſh to ſully your
nor? Mine is not in their keeping,
plied ſhe, haughtily; and when I h
no cauſe to reproach myſelf, I do
fear it from any one elſe. Do not e
hibit any of thoſe aſſumed airs of haugh
behaviour, ſaid Mrs. Burton, who w
now a little relieved from her terror.

Neither do you, madam, interrupt
Malvina, with a dignified air of energ
any more affront me, whom the laws
hoſpitality, at leaſt, ſhould have allow
you to treat with reſpect. Your beh
viour to me has been uniformly unkin
you have endeavoured to diſtreſs, wh
you ought to have protected me.—And
I diſdai

dain to mention particulars, it is be-
: I leave you to the remorſe of your
conſcience.

ave heard you, madam, and do not
ine that I wiſh to remain another
ent with you; for I ſhall think my-
more ſafe any where than in this
:. On ſaying this, ſhe called to Peter,
ted him to order a chaiſe, and deſire
kins to bring Frances.

t what is your intention, Malvina?
Sir Edmond, alarmed) where can
go at this late hour? and what will
ne of you? That I am a ſtranger
plied ſhe; but I am abſolutely de-
ned to go—and Heaven will direct
r the beſt. Dear Malvina, ſaid Sir
nd, I cannot—will not ſuffer you
oſe yourſelf to danger; at leaſt per-
e to accompany you? No, ſir, not
you or any one elſe ſhall accom-
me; I wiſh to fly from this deteſted

place, and not any one here h
to prevent me.

Will you allow me, madam,
miſſion of conducting you to my
ſaid Lord Weymouth, where
be treated as you deſerve; an
deſire it, I will give you my h
I will not enter the houſe while
main there.

A thouſand thanks. for yc
obliging intention, my lord, ſ
vina; but I confeſs if I was to
protector from here, you woul
the perſon I ſhould ſelect.
better take pity on her, ſaid
wick, addreſſing Mrs. Burton;
tion is diſtreſſing, and you are
good. Well, ſaid ſhe, to fa
interceſſion, and on account of
my own relation, I *conſent* to
to paſs the night here.

Do you judge of me by yourself? (faid Malvina, with contempt) and can you think me capable of accepting, as a favor, that which I have rejected from intreaties? I fhall leave you, madam, to diftribute your favours to thofe who can, without blufhing, degradingly ftoop to all your wifhes and commands; but learn, at the fame time, there are characters which no fituation or change can debafe.

As to you, Sir Edmond, and Lord Weymouth, added fhe, with energy; and taking a hand of each—if my fituation in the leaft affects you, fpare me the only mifery I cannot fupport, and give me your words, that you will not renew a fcene, of which only the idea ftabs me to the heart? Malvina, as fhe fpoke, had fomething fo affecting in her voice, and fo fweetly intereſting in her look, that it was impoſſible to reſiſt her intreaties.—Sir Edmond, and Lord Weymouth, whatever anger remained, acceded to her wiſhes;

wiſhes; and immediately both p
to obey her.

As ſoon as ſhe was relieved fr
fear, being informed that Tomki
ready in the carriage with Franc
inſtantly followed them, leavin
Burton, and all the reſt, petrified
empire which timidity and inn
ſometimes has the power of aſſumi
arrogance and preſumption.

Sir Edmond, however, prevai
Malvina to allow him to lead her
carriage, and ſnatched that oppor
to enquire where ſhe meant to go,
he ſhould meet her the next day
kirk? I ſhall endeavour to go
where for the preſent, ſhe replied;
promiſe to wait for you there.

As ſoon as they had left the hou
Edmond, out of reſpect to her, a
prevent all ſuſpicion, did not leav

Bu

s for ſome hours after. He had
d the ill treatment by which a
ble vanity had been capable of af-
ſo gentle a being. But Lord
uth could not contain his reſent-
hen he ſpoke to the ladies; but
a he conſidered as a deteſtable
to whom he did not condeſcend
ange a ſentence—and he left the
the inſtant delicacy would per-
n, to fly from ſo deteſtable a

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

ONE DAY OF HAPPINESS.

BY the aſſiſtance of guineas, Malvina eaſily prevailed o driver to convey her immediatel Falkirk, where ſhe arrived at midı and alighted at the beſt inn. She ii diately put Frances to bed; and, co ous that the recollections of the eve and the thoughts of the enſuing would baniſh Morpheus from her

w, ſhe opened her window, which pre-
nted a beautiful view of the country,
id gave way to the various ſenſations
d reflections which her preſent ſituation
turally created.

She beheld the firſt beams of that day
pear which was to decide her future
tiny. Little Frances continued in a
eet ſleep till late in the morning; Mal-
a was uneaſy, and agitated, liſtening
the ſound of every carriage, fearing it
ght be Sir Edmond—and ſtill more
rful that he would not come. She
ntemplated the ſweet repoſe of her
d with a heavy ſigh, and envied thoſe
quil ſlumbers, which ſhe was incapa-
of enjoying; when Sir Edmond ſud-
ly preſented himſelf.—I am come very
(ſaid he) but the fear of expoſing
to the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion, determined
to come alone; I therefore came part
he way on foot; and though I walked
very

very quick, yet I obſerve I have loſt, to my ſorrow, ſome hours of that ineſtimable day which you had conſented to grant me.

It is far from its decline yet, ſaid Malvina, affected by ſeeing Sir Edmond overheated and covered with duſt, and more ſo at the motive which occaſioned it, we have time ſufficient to be together; and as you appear to be fatigued, it will be much better if you take a few minutes repoſe, and I will ſee you afterwards.

Malvina, ſaid Sir Edmond, ſeating himſelf by her, and taking her hand, which he preſſed between both his—When I behold you, when I am with you, not by chance, but by your own conſent; when I have no reaſon to fear the intruſion of the malicious to diſturb thoſe ſweet moments, can you believe it poſſible, that I would voluntarily loſe one of them.

Ah!

"Ah! let me enjoy, without interruption, the felicity of contemplating the miſtreſs of my heart, the confidant of my thoughts, and the arbitreſs of my deſtiny. She whoſe gentle pity is moved in my favor, and whoſe generous and exalted goodneſs can lead and form me to all thoſe virtues which can pleaſe her.

"Stop, Sir Edmond, interrupted Malvina, turning aſide her face to conceal her emotion, thoſe epithets do not belong to me. The reſpect which I owe my friend, the laſt promiſes which I gave her on her death-bed, makes it my duty to renounce you.—Do not hope to induce me to forget it. Beſides, that is not the only objection which can ſeparate us.—Do I not know, that as you have ſo generouſly reſigned your fortune in favor of your ſiſter, that Mrs. Burton has reſerved her's for you? Do you think it poſſible that I ever could conſent to be

the

the cauſe which would deprive you
it?

Hear me, Malvina, replied he,
an energy which he endeavoured to
derate—when I am actuated from
muſt concern the future happineſs of
life, I muſt baniſh all faſtidious and
perſtitious prejudices, and only
deavour to follow nature, and liſten
truth. It is true that I have given aw
a part of my fortune to my ſiſter,
it is a ſacrifice which will ever afford
the utmoſt gratification, becauſe it
contributed to her happineſs, but I
indeed think it a ſtill greater, if it
alſo contributed to gain me a ſhare
your eſteem.—Yet do not appreciate
too highly. As from the ſlight va
which I ſet upon riches, it gives me
concern than any thing elſe might.

As to Mrs. Burton's fortune, I ne
paid the leaſt attention to ſuch a concer
wh

was conscious it was only to be
d at the expence of flattery and
on to her will. And I hope that
so much of Malvina's esteem, as
will believe, that from the purity
affection which she has inspired,
long renounced all claim to such
ges, as can only be acquired at
ence of truth and honor.

Sir Edmond, replied Malvina,
leased with such a congeniality of
nt, I also wished to speak to you
e youthful errors—those transient
—the sole recollection of which
o frighten and deter every woman
ght dare to have an affection for you.
ely such errors may be conquered,
have had so much strength of mind
tain those noble and generous sen-
, in a world where they are but
ten obliterated; yet, without de-
them, you may still preserve
Hurton's favor, by relinquishing
me.

me. For ſhe both loves and fear
and will liſten to truths from you
being offended; and all the retu
requires for her kindneſs, is, th
unite yourſelf to a beautiful and a
young lady, whoſe favor and pro
may raiſe you to the firſt rank
kingdom. Theſe are not your ow
timents, Malvina, ſaid Sir Edmond,
ly, I cannot believe that you wou
viſe me to ſacrifice the woman w
love, for her whom I do not?

For a little droſs, and a few vain
can you convince me, that if you
my ſituation, ſimilar motives wou
duce you to act in ſuch a manne
therefore, your heart would repulſe
with contempt, why have I deſerve
degradation in your opinion, as t
gine that I was capable of yieldi
them?

I acknow

I acknowledge my injuſtice, Sir Edmond, I have done you an injury, by ſuppoſing I could convince you by thoſe arguments which make ſo deep an impreſſion upon common minds, replied Malvina. Alas! why did I even think of ſuch, when there are others ſo much more powerful?

There are not any, cried he, with ardour, which can or ſhall ſeparate me from my beloved Malvina! And ſurely there are not any which ſhould induce her to leave the man who adores her.—Ah! Malvina, I think you will approve of the plan I have fixed upon; and if it does meet with your approbation, you will anticipate the pleaſure of which ſuch a perſpective gives the idea. — I have a paternal eſtate, which is ſituated a few miles from Glaſgow, on the banks of the Clyde, in a moſt pleaſant and fertile country.

The

The manſion is large and commodious, and the lands belonging to the eſtate, bring in a revenue quite ſufficient for all the neceſſaries of life. Do you think you could live there, Malvina? Will you conſent to unite your deſtiny with mine, become my wife, my friend, and the ſovereign of my exiſtence? There we may forget the world, and never once regret thoſe vain and tranſient pleaſures, which I have but too often found illuſive. There I ſhall have no other deſire but to pleaſe you; all my ambition will be to imitate you, by adopting thoſe ſentiments which are ſo dear to you. There, when guided by you, virtue will become a pleaſure to me.

And as we, together, viſit the cottages of the poor, our only diſpute will be, who ſhall do the moſt good, and all our rivalſhip will be in virtue, and love for each other. Ah! it will be there abſorbed

[redacted] by my love, and my happineſs, [redacted] knowing, ſeeing, or loving any [redacted] you, feeling that you are the ſource [redacted] all my affections, my thoughts, and [redacted] end of all my actions.

Oh! Malvina, do not therefore reject [redacted] entreaties, my wiſhes, and my tears. [redacted] have no other idea of happineſs but [redacted] is inſpired by you, nor the leaſt [redacted] for life, unleſs you will partake it [redacted] me. His agitation prevented him [redacted] ſaying any more. The tears rolled [redacted] his face, and the energy of his [redacted] and diſcourſe, animated by his [redacted] ion, gave him an eloquence which [redacted] nearly ſubdued Malvina; when, to [redacted] her diſtreſs, ſhe turned her head [redacted] de, and chancing to caſt her eyes to- [redacted] rds Frances, ſhe ran and took her in [redacted] r arms, ſaying, come my beloved child, [redacted] ſhield me from the moſt powerful of [redacted] ducers; let me preſs you to my boſom, [redacted] I may fortify my courage. And,

ah! recall me to fulfill the promiſe
I made to thy angel mother. ſa
my heart from being overcome by
own wiſhes, and harden it, if it is poſſ
againſt the inſinuations of an objeſt
much beloved.

No Frances, no, cried Sir Edw
rather lend thy innocent voice to
me in my endeavours to touch the
of this inſenſible woman. Tell her,
her conſcientious ſcruples lead
aſtray, and deceive her. Tell
ſhe did not promiſe thy mother to re
free, but while it conduced to her
pineſs; for her duty rather preſc
that ſhe ſhould give me her hand.
her, that you will alſo become the o
of my care, the child of my heart,
my adoption; and that my days ſh
dedicated to you as well as herſelf.

And you, Lady Sheridan, ſaid he, ſi
on one knee, and raiſing his hand

wards Heaven; if it is permitted the bleſſed, in the ethereal regions, to read the hearts of thoſe on earth; you then can be a witneſs of the ſincerity of my vows. Ah! bleſſed ſpirit, diſpoſe the heart of your friend to liſten to them, and your dear infant ſhall be the ſolemn pledge between us. Oh! my dear, good mama, cried the little creature; what does he cry ſo for in this manner? Is it becauſe you have been ſcolding him? Only ſee then how he begs you to forgive him; I will kneel too, and beg, and then you, who are ſo very, very good, will ſurely give him what he wants?

Ah, what is it I hear, ſaid Malvina, agonized; Clara, my tenderly beloved Clara, thy daughter ſeems to ſpeak for thee! And can it be? Am I then at liberty in reality to give my hand? And you, added ſhe, permitting Sir Edmond to take her hand; you, who poſſeſs ſuch power over me. Ah! I am not perfectly

conſcious whether I am in an illuſion or blinded by a ſuperſtitious preſentiment which leads me wrong, or deceived by my own heart: but I cannot reſiſt their united, perhaps fatal, importunities any longer; and if I am not guilty in thus yielding my hand to you, I do conſent to be your's.

It is then mine, really mine, cried he with tranſport. Thou beloved, and beſt of women, whoſe very firſt look ſubdued me, and rendered thee the arbitreſs of my deſtiny. She is then mine, ſhe, who alone taught me to know love; I ſee, I preſs her to my heart; ſhe loves me, ſhe belongs to me! His happineſs was too great to allow him to ſay any more. Their tears fell in uniſon, as the only teſtimonies ſuitable to ſuch a ſcene. The emotions experienced in ſuch a ſcene, ſeemed as if they had once belonged to beings of a higher order; or that they were infuſed into ſome natures, to give

them

them an idea of the felicity which is to be the eternal lot of the virtuous in Heaven.

Sir Edmond did not wiſh to leave Malvina if he could have avoided it. He intreated her to name the day, the moment when ſhe would bleſs him with her hand; but ſhe denied him in a tone that convinced him that ſhe would be obeyed. It is my deſire, ſaid ſhe, that for the ſpace of one month, you will return and partake of all the pleaſures and enjoyments of the faſhionable world, and after that time, if you can leave them without regret, and are not alarmed at the idea of being deprived of them for ever, you will let me know it Edmond, and Malvina will believe you.

She thinks you will not abuſe the confidence ſhe places in you, and that the facility with which you might do ſo, will be the moſt powerful inducement for

you to avoid it. From ſuch a pro
the one I have mentioned, and no
that has convinced me, ſhould I da
become your wife: equally as mu
account of your happineſs as my
As I do not wiſh to owe the fa
which you intend to make for my
to the feelings of the moment, b
your deliberate and mature choic
determination, which can only be
tained by abſence.

It ſhall be ſo, Malvina! I will
you! Not that I have a doubt
own ſentiments ever being differen
what they are at preſent. But
would I not undergo to obtai
bleſſing to which I dare to aſpire.
tainly I am unworthy of you at pr
and I ſhall be more capable of
ciating the felicity, when I have
deſerved it. Yet, how tedious, ho
ſome, will this long month appear,
abſent from you! You! who are

to Mrs. St. Clare; to a woman who deteſts me, who may prejudice you againſt me.

What reaſon has ſhe to hate you? demanded Malvina; how can you have deſerved ſuch an epithet from ſo amiable and intereſting a woman? Alas! Malvina, I am not at liberty to inform you of the particulars. I certainly have injured her greatly; the part I have acted with regard to her, is not quite inexcuſable; but I ſhall render it ſo, if I divulge the ſecret which I have ſworn to keep, as Mrs. St. Clare alone has that privilege. And yet, Malvina, ſhe is unacquainted with all the motives which might plead as an extenuation of my conduct! Though by revealing this myſtery to you, ſhe may ruin me in your good opinion; inſtead of which, could I dare to inform you, I might hope for your indulgence. But it is no matter, I will abide by the conſequences.—And the lover of Malvina will rather prefer

the fear of being judged guilty, to the diſhonor of being ſo in reality.

Do not alarm yourſelf by any fears of that kind, replied Malvina, I never give my confidence by halves, and I therefore promiſe to avoid any converſation upon that ſubject, which Mrs. St. Clare may think proper to relate to me. I ſhall therefore wait till you are permitted to inform me yourſelf. Ah! Malvina, ſaid he, much affected, what being in this world is there that could be ſo deſpicable as to abuſe ſo generous a confidence, that even in this extreme, cannot be termed a weakneſs, as it proceeds entirely from the purity of your own heart. That conviction alone would ever deter me from deceiving you, even was it ſo, that I could not obtain you without it.

Excellent, amiable woman, reſt aſſured that ſuch a confidence will never be abuſed. For, by raiſing me to thyſelf,

Malvina,

Malvina, you have placed me in ſo exalted a ſituation, that I cannot deſcend without debaſing myſelf. And by that ſacred altar which I have raiſed to you in my heart, I vow to communicate all my thoughts, or rather never to form any which ſhall give me cauſe to bluſh. But Malvina, added he, with ſome confuſion; ſince I have thus laid open my heart to you, may I not aſk why you have been ſo uniformly ſilent upon a ſubject which I am almoſt fearful of entering into, though it ſo much concerns our peace? you have ever concealed your correſpondence with Mr. Prior from me, which has cauſed me many moments of real pain; indeed, I ſhall not let my preſent felicity without an allay, if you have deſired him to relinquiſh that privilege.

This confeſſion rather aſtoniſhed Malvina; but taking the letter from her pocket-book, and looking ſteadily at

Sir Edmond, you shall hear if you [illegible] cause for uneasiness, said she; and ing the paper she read what follows

"My situation becomes eve more wretched. The distress whic hold my parents labour under, re heart! Alas! it is in vain that I hav every possible means to assist an fort them; but every thing w undertake falls in its success; it as if the vicious, and impiety alon permitted to prosper in this wor they daily accumulate riches, w may keep my heart pure to n pose. 'For verily I have cl my heart in vain, and washed my in innocency.' Alas! I am a and distressed even to agony days glide without hope, an nights are passed in sorrow, a eyes can no longer behold co We live solitary and neglected, misery and despair seem to dispute

right to our asylum; and I should soon sink under their united efforts, if it was not for your letters, which for a moment recall my attachment to life."

Thus interrupted, Sir Edmond, with some asperity; this man owes what happiness he does enjoy to you alone? It is you who form all his comfort; he receives your letters with emotion, calls you his dear Malvina, and perhaps pure as he may imagine himself, his heart may have formed hopes, which these marks of your friendship will but serve to increase; and yet you do not even offer to desist, but are rather strengthening his hopes by constantly granting——.

Stop, for Heaven's sake, Sir Edmond, replied Malvina, hastily; and reflect a moment upon the misery of this unfortunate being, who has no other comfort to flee to, but the sympathy of a friend. And shall I, at such a time, refuse to hear

his ſorrows, and perhaps endeavour to ſooth them? It is but merely the office of charity. Oh! then, you, who are from henceforth to be my director and guide, do not wiſh to render me hard, unfeeling and ungrateful, but make a generous uſe of that power, and rather ſay that you approve of my addreſſing a few friendly words of ſoothing conſolation to an unhappy man, who feels comforted and relieved by them. And do not ſo far injure either yourſelf or me, by indulging the idea that they can have the leaſt tendency or connection with thoſe ſentiments which you inſpire.

It is not you, Malvina, ſaid Sir Edmond, of whom I have the ſlighteſt doubt. But when I am conſcious that any other in the world but myſelf dares to love you, to think of you with rapture, and perhaps—and that ſtill you do not forbid him from——Malvina, forgive me; but I ſhould really deceive you if I

was

ſilent upon a ſubject that alarms
embitters my exiſtence! Perhaps,
lled Malvina, I was imprudent in
epting the friendſhip of Mr. Prior?
haps, I ſhould have reflected that not-
ſtanding his religious and virtuous
racter, and ſituation, his ſex alone
uld have deterred me from forming
intimacy with him. But to deſiſt,
at this diſtreſſing moment, would
only increaſing his miſery, and per-
drive him to a ſtate of deſperation,
he will immediately conclude that
s entirely obliterated from my memo-
and perhaps, we may both be ſorry
he conſequences.

ou make me tremble, Malvina, cried
dmond, for I certainly do not wiſh
duce that good man to ſuch a ſtate
ſpair; but to-morrow, when I return
linburgh, I will make it my buſineſs
nd out a ſituation or employment,
h may be ſo beneficial, as to place
both

both him and his family above want. And when I have been ſo fortunate as to accompliſh this, my own Malvina—I underſtand you; ſaid ſhe, and I promiſe from that moment to deſiſt from any farther correſpondence with him. But in the mean time, you ſhall read all the letters which paſs between us.

No, replied he, if I had any doubts, I would have mentioned them; all my anxiety proceeds from the tender manner in which he addreſſes you, and from his writing ſo frequently. Believe me, my only love, I do not require more from you. On your affection alone, I will perfectly rely, for your relieving me as ſoon as poſſible, from an idea to which neither reaſon or pity can reconcile me. You will alſo believe, Sir Edmond, that this generous reliance, will make every line I write painful to me, and every word, which from kindneſs and humanity I am forced to adopt to Mr. Prior, make me wiſh for

for the moment which will put an end to it.

Such were the terms upon which they ſeparated, though not before they had previouſly given a mutual promiſe to write and even ſee each other, if any unforeſeen circumſtance ſhould render ſuch a ſtep neceſſary.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

HOW LITTLE ARE THE HOPES OF HAPPINESS TO BE DEPENDED UPON.

MRS. St. Clare was as much ſurpriſed as delighted, to again behold Malvina, and not a little pleaſed that ſhe had returned ſo ſoon; and after expreſſing the moſt affectionate marks of the ſatisfaction it gave her; I ſhould be too much flattered, ſaid ſhe, if I could hope that you have thus gratified me from a diſlike to public life only; and that your fondneſs

fondneſs, for retirement is not owing to any other cauſe.?

I wiſh I had the power of expreſſing my acknowledgments, ſaid Malvina, and that I could ſay, that my ſudden appearance was only prompted by the great intereſt which you have inſpired. But this would be an untruth; for I really had not the choice of an aſylum, and in the ſituation to which I was reduced, the offer which you had ſo kindly made, was the only one I could adopt.

Ah! what is it I hear? What is Mrs. Burton's houſe, as well as thoſe of her numerous acquaintance, no longer your's?. Are they not happy to receive you? I have left Mrs. Burton for ever, and I do not deſire to behold her again, ſaid Malvina. You have left Mrs. Burton, then? replied Mrs. St. Clare, aſtoniſhed. There muſt have been ſome very powerful motive to induce you to take

ſuch

ſuch a ſtep? My dear friend, replied Malvina, affectionately, do not aſk me, as from the peculiar attentions you have ſhewn me, I ſhould be ſorry to deny you any thing; but under the preſent circumſtances I have promiſed to remain ſilent, whatever it may coſt my heart, which would otherwiſe with pleaſure repoſe all its griefs in your friendly boſom. That is ſufficient, returned Mrs. St. Clare; I have but too often myſelf been taught by experience, that from reaſons the moſt trivial in themſelves, we are ſometimes, from particular circumſtances, forced to appear whimſical and myſterious. Therefore, my dear madam, as I perfectly underſtand your wiſhes, you may be certain of my compliance in every thing which can contribute to your ſatisfaction.

The following days paſſed with rapidity. Mrs. St. Clare's father having been called to London upon buſineſs, ſhe

more at liberty to enjoy the ſociety Malvina. And Malvina was perfectly liberty to diſpoſe of her time as was moſt agreeable, without fearing to meet of thoſe inquiſitive looks which ſeem enquire how it has been ſpent; or the formal and conſtrained attentions ch oblige you to anſwer them, how- r ridiculous.

Mrs. St. Clare ſpent part of the day in own apartment; and Malvina occu- d part of her's in attending to the ucation of her little girl, in reading and metimes in the indulgence of the moſt ghtful reveries in the pleaſant gar- s of St. Clare-Hall. It cannot be agined that Malvina had all at once got the vices to which Sir Edmond s addicted. She, on the contrary, quently recollected them, and all ich had happened at Burton-Hall. For ough he had not abſolutely acknow- lged his intrigue with Miſs Melmor,

yet

yet he had said sufficient to prevent her from having any further doubt of it that prudence and honor forbade him to be more explicit.

But the sentiment which now gover her heart, placed him in such a point view, that she could only look upon th vices as transient weaknesses; for sometimes had heard of those who w free from such errors as Sir Edmon who were also devoid of his best qua ties. But, in the midst of these reflec tions, if she had been told that he h been wise and reserved in his youth, s would have undoubtedly said that su a character could not possibly err; be cause such a one was endowed by Hea ven with such an exalted mind, that i could repulse every idea which could i the slightest manner degrade it; and therefore could never enjoy a pleasur which was not allied to virtue.

For

For above fifteen days had Malvina ed to indulge her tenderneſs without ntradiction, and without bluſhing: ough ſhe was not happy, ſhe thought at ſhe was going to be ſo, and the ſent ſcene was embelliſhed by the ys of hope which illumined the per-ſpective. She could not yet enjoy that nity which happineſs gives; but that ſet agitation of the heart, which exiſts ly in the expectation of it. Sometimes r thoughts were abſorbed by the cer-inty of being beloved by Sir Edmond, at ſhe alone was the object of his attach-nt, was a pleaſure which harmonized ſoul, and vibrated to her heart.

During the ſilence of night, her oughts ſtill reverted to the ſame ob-t, and when ſhe did recollect herſelf, would forget that ſhe was beloved r the pleaſure ſhe found in loving; and ſuch moments ſhe felt happy in the ea of the affection ſhe beſtowed. For this

this delicate and generous ſenti
when real, does not always depend
a return for the pleaſure it finds
attachment to a deſerving object.

But her heart indulged the hop
he might become the virtuous bei
wiſhed him. After many hours
alone, under theſe pleaſing illuſion
delightful hopes, Malvina, thoug
parently far from happy, yet felt
her exiſtence would be a pain t
was ſhe now to be deprived of them.

The month of trial was now
elapſed, and Malvina flattered h
that it had ſerved only to ſtrengthe
Edmond in his reſolution of givi
every thing for her ſake. She al
with a bluſh, began to anticipate th
ment when he would return and
her as his own. When one morni
ſhe was at breakfaſt with Mrs. St
two letters were brought to her,

em, the agitation of her heart con-
ineed her, was from Sir Edmond. The
hen ſhe ſaw was from Lord Sheridan.

But as his lordſhip ſeldom or ever
rote but a few lines of mere enquiry
oncerning his daughter, and politeneſs
herſelf, ſhe was not under the neceſ-
ity of opening his, but at her leiſure;
nd therefore laid it on one ſide till ſhe
ad peruſed the one from Sir Edmond,
hich was as follows—

" Though Mrs. Burton, ever ſince my
eturn, has been made acquainted that
ou was the only object of my tender
affection, yet ſhe could not reſiſt from
ttempting a laſt effort, yeſterday, to
ntice me back to Lady Mary Summerhill,
y informing me, that her fortune was to
e the alternative. In anſwer to which
propoſal, I poſitively declared to this
ambitious woman, that I moſt willingly
renounced all her benefits, that the hand

of

of Malvina was all that I coveted, and that we both ſhould be happy without wiſhing to receive any thing from her. Theſe words irritated her to the laſt degree.

"Then, ſaid ſhe, if you were both to come begging at my door, I would not ſtretch out my hand to ſave you from miſery. Go, ungrateful man, go to that deceitful creature, for whom you are going to ſacrifice my friendſhip and fortune. Go, and receive from her lips, the tender affection which Mr. Prior received from her before you did. But ſhould you reach the altar, do not imagine yourſelf ſo ſecure, but that I may find means to ſeparate you. I ſhall puniſh you for your inſolence and contempt; and when you are ſeparated forever, you will repent.

"Ah! I ſhall not be long, ſaid I, being from ſuch a fury, who, not ſatis-

y endeavouring to part me from her I ove, would wiſh to poiſon my happi- neſs, by for ever recalling the idea of your attachment for Mr. Prior, and that particular moment when ſhe ſurpriſed you both in a ſtate of agitation—when your ſorrows were ſo great—and your conſtant correſpondence—

"Cruel, barbarous woman! this was the venom ſhe wiſhed to ſhed over my ſoul, and her malicious heart enjoyed the power of tormenting me. Oh! my gentle, my dear Malvina, come, and, by your preſence, baniſh theſe fatal ideas; and as I have fulfilled your commands, I may know that you are my own. The moment which was propoſed by yourſelf is arrived, though Mrs. Burton will, I am ſenſible, employ all the arts ſhe is miſtreſs of to ſeparate us; yet, if it is true that you love me, and my repoſe is dear to you, delay not, my Malvina, to come; and let the ineſtimable gift of

your hand be inſtead of an anſwer to
letter.

"I am at preſent at Kinroſs, a
twelve miles from Mrs. St. Clare's; t
I ſhall impatiently wait for you. It is
thence I have ſent the expreſs, which
certainly, in a few hours, bring bac
leaſt a line from my Malvina, which I
trace without agitation. For in th
ſhall hope to find the aſſurance of
conſenting to fix to-morrow as the
tunate day which is to unite our
tinies. If Malvina can heſitate; but
ſhe knows me; and ſince I am dear
her, ſhe will not diſappoint me. T
to-morrow—what ſhall I behold! that
in which ſhe is to pledge her faith,
receive my ſolemn vows, that I will ne
love any one but her. In ſhort, to
come for ever happy.

"Oh! Malvina, by the love I bear y
haſten to me; I am writing this at m
nig

ght, that my expreſs may ſet out at y-break; and I ſhall wait his return, a ey to all thoſe tumultuous agitations ich exhauſt life by the exceſs of our lings, and which I could not exiſt un-r, if the hopes which created them, ould deceive me."

Malvina read this letter ſeveral times thout knowing what ſtep to take, or at anſwer to return Sir Edmond, when e was informed the man who had ought it was waiting for her anſwer, d that he intreated ſhe would be as uick as poſſible, for the gentleman who nt him was in ſuch haſte, that he had hreatened him ſeverely if he did not re-rn at the appointed time, and pro-miſed to reward him handſomely if he as punctual.

Theſe words ſur ſed Mrs. St. Clare; he fixed her eyes on Malvina, who in-

ſtantly caſt her's down, and bluſhed;
diſtreſſed by Sir Edmond's anxiet
impatience of his expreſs, and th
ticular looks of her amiable friend.
haſtily ſnatched the firſt ſheet of
ſhe could find, and traced a co
which ſhe would have been unjuſt
fuſing. She was quite agitated wh
had given it the meſſenger, tha
voice was ſo tremelous ſhe could ſc
be heard.

When he was gone, her diſtre
creaſed, on being alone with Mi
Clare. Malvina was ſenſible this
wanted an explanation; but how
ſhe do that with propriety, after th
miſe ſhe had given Sir Edmond r
mention their preſent ſituation? Y
remembered that Mrs. St. Clare ob
her very attentively, but remained
as if expecting her to ſpeak on th
ject. Fearful of diſobliging her b
verſing on any other, and not dar

m

her departure, fearing her en-
, Malvina continued ſilent, and
longer ſhe remained ſo, the more
ome the tête-à-tête became.

at laſt became ſo oppreſſed by her
tions and ſituation, that ſhe breathed
difficulty, and her eyes fixed on the
und. Mrs. St. Clare, affected by the
reſs ſhe obſerved her in, endeavoured
recall her to herſelf, by thoſe intereſt-
attentions which the heart prompts us
offer; and was juſt holding out her
nd to take Malvina's, who, in or-
r to avoid it, immediately took up
ord Sheridan's letter which ſhe had laid
the table, and haſtily broke the ſeal,
order to conceal her embarraſſment,
nder this pretended employment.

She had no ſooner peruſed a few lines,
an every other idea vaniſhed. A ſud-
en paleneſs overſpread her countenance,
cold chill enervated her whole frame;

ſhe

she felt her strength fail her, and h
scarcely reached the conclusion of
cruel mandate which she held in
hand, when she sunk under the
pressure of the sorrows it announce
and fell, without sense or motion,
to the arms of Mrs. St. Clare, fai
murmuring—Ah! it is done—my
mond, we are ruined for ever.

END OF VOL. II.

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MALVINA.

MALVINA,

BY

*MADAME C****,*

AUTHORESS OF CLARE D'ALBE, AND AMELIA MANSFIELD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MISS GUNNING,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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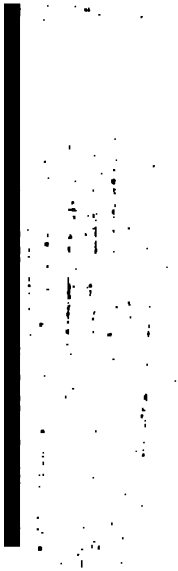

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PAGE

MALVINA.

CHAP. I.

LANATION OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

MRS. St. Clare was moſt bly affected at the ſituation of her ble companion; ſhe inſtantly uſed y method to recover her, but finding ier endeavours ineffectual, ſhe as- ł in having her conveyed to her nber. They laid her on the bed, and continued for ſome time longer in- ol. III. B ſenſible;

ſenſible: at laſt, after Mrs. St. Clare's repeated efforts to recover her, ſhe had the felicity to ſee her open her eyes, and giving a deep ſigh, ſhe continued ſilent. Mrs. St. Clare preſſed her in her arms, and her ſilent tears fell on the face of Malvina.

Calm your agitated ſpirits, my dear Malvina, ſaid ſhe, in the ſofteſt accents, a little repoſe will be neceſſary; I will leave you for a ſhort time, but do not let it be long before you recall me. Ah, madam, I wiſh to open my heart to you; little did I imagine how much you was to be pitied—Ah! how infinitely do I feel my friendſhip for you increaſed. Mrs. St. Clare's diſtreſs augmented, on ſaying this, to find Malvina remained ſilent; therefore, fearful of increaſing her painful ſenſations, ſhe retired.

As ſoon as Malvina found herſelf alone, ſhe looked mournfully round her, and perceiving

ing Lord Sheridan's letter, ſhe
d, and puſhed it from her; but
ſter took it up and re-peruſed it,
s with the idea that ſhe might have
ſtrued it, or that ſome hope might
rom it on a ſecond peruſal.

ord Sheridan to Madame de Sorcy.

" MADAM,

As I have juſt been informed that
: on the point of marrying, with-
ſhing to inveſtigate the motives
have induced ſuch a determina-
ſhall not even enquire why you
emained ſilent on this ſubject in
r letters, neither will I reproach
th the imprudent and public man-
which you have ſeparated your-
m your reſpectable relation, who
obligingly received you in her fa-
nd who is ſo extremely diſtreſſed
ſtrange conduct.

 " I ſhall

"I ſhall only obſerve, that as you have thought proper to invalidate the promiſe which you made your friend, I have certainly a right to retract from mine. I therefore inform you, that I do not intend my daughter to be brought up in the ſame houſe with ſuch a man as he is, whom you have ſelected for your huſband; nor ſhall ſhe remain under the protection of one to whom I am a ſtranger.

"It was to you alone that Lady Sheridan confided her child; and from the moment you reſign your liberty, ſhe is, from that inſtant, no longer under your direction; and I ſhall then exerciſe my authority.

"You will be ſo obliging then, madam, the moment you are united, to place my daughter under the care of your reſpectable relation, Mrs. Burton, who has conſented to take the charge of her, until my affairs permit me to ſend

for

r her. Without wiſhing to give you e ſlighteſt offence, allow me to ſay, at we muſt not always rely too much on ppearances.

" Your friend, when on her death ed, bathed by your tears, confiding en-rely in your friendſhip, and complain-g of my want of affection, little ima-ned I ſhould be more faithful and at-tive in fulfilling all the duties which e wiſhed to her child.

I am with reſpect,
Madam,
Your obedient Servant,

SHERIDAN."

P. S. It will be quite uſeleſs for you give yourſelf the trouble of anſwering is, as I am on the point of departure r Ireland, and ſhall continue there uring the Summer.

Malvina was aſtoniſhed at this as ſhe had not an idea he would taken the trouble to write on this ſion, as it was very ſeldom ſhe gain an anſwer, of a few lines or any particulars relative to his dau which ſhe had informed him of; a negligence in this particular was r able. That he ſhould be ſo ſu alarmed, at the idea of a marriage ſhe ſuppoſed to be ſo perfectly indi to him, that ſhe did not think it ne to inform him of it. But from this it was plainly to be ſeen, that the proceeded from Mrs. Burton; an was convinced it was to her ſhe debted for this misfortune.

She was not deceived; for the m ſhe left the houſe, Mrs. Burton diately wrote to Lord Sheridan, a quainted him with it, that ſhe migh him in her intereſt. She therefo ſinuated every thing which ſhe t

prejudice him againſt Malvina; under the maſk of friendſhip to deſcribed the imprudence of Mal- conduct, alſo her being ſo ex- ly obſtinate and conceited, as eaſily deluded by it.

s in your power, ſaid ſhe, in her o Lord Sheridan, to prevent this tune from overwhelming both her s, as my couſin's only objection to arriage, is the child Lady Sheridan ed to her care; therefore, by in- g her that you will take it from ſhe perſiſts in fulfilling this un- y union, you will not only ſave the of your wife from ruin, but the mily in Scotland from deſpair.— s, as a father, there is another con- ion which ought to encourage you proceeding, which is, the intereſt daughter demands. For if my ſhould retrieve the good opinion ſhe has ſo nearly loſt—as ſhe has

been the occaſion of a duel, and quitted my houſe in ſo public a manner, ſhe will then inherit, with my will, part of my fortune, which, added to what ſhe poſſeſſes of her own, if ſhe ſhould not marry, will become the inheritance of your child.

Lord Sheridan, from having poſſeſſed an immenſe fortune, had ſo much impaired it by riot and debauchery, that the reſidue of it was ſcarcely ſufficient to pay his debts. His conſcience frequently reproached him, even when ſurrounded by the moſt alluring pleaſures, with the torturing idea of having ruined his daughter. Under theſe circumſtances, which oppreſſed his mind, it will not excite ſo much aſtoniſhment, that he ſo inſtantaneouſly coincided with Mrs. Burton's ſcheme, in order to ſoothe his remorſe; therefore, he wrote in the very terms ſhe wiſhed, and which ſo much affected Malvina.

Ah!

Ah! cried Malvina, ſhedding a torrent tears; do not fear, my beloved Clara, thy child ſhall ever be placed under unworthy a woman's care as Mrs. rton's. For if her unfeeling father fts in his intention of taking her from wife of Sir Edmond, never will Mala accept that title, for ſhe will have itude ſufficient to renounce all that loves, rather than deviate in what owes thee.

h! Edmond, dear and much loved mond, an eternal ſeparation will take ce of our intended union; and ind of the happineſs which you expected m my love, I ſhall plunge a dagger thy heart by this fatal change. Unppy Malvina! wretched Edmond—how ftly have the days of hope and joy d. Diſtreſs approaches like the darkſs of night, and heavily clouds our iſtence. Adieu, ſweet and flattering imeras; through whoſe brilliant me-

dium I had beheld the ſunbeams of happineſs enlighten the perſpective of my future horizon. Adieu to that felicity, which I had vainly imagined I was ſo near realizing. Thou haſt now fled from me for ever! But I have been taught in what manner to appreciate it.

How does my dear Malvina find herſelf? ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, opening the door; may I be permitted to come in, will my preſence be an intruſion? Malvina made a ſign with her hand; Mrs. St. Clare approached, and preſſing it between both her's, looked at her in the tendereſt manner, and ſaid, do not be the leaſt alarmed at the idea of my making any enquiries concerning your ſituation, this morning; I too well know there are ſome chords of ſenſibility which cannot be touched, without their vibrating through the whole frame; and I reſpect your ſorrows too much to penetrate their ſource. But let me hope my amiable

ble friend, when the wing of time may bear away your reserve; and that I may obtain that confidence, I would not wish in your present weak state.

Ah! what do you say? replied Malvina—What do you hope from time? To-morrow I must leave you, for him who expects me. You leave me? You are expected? Where are you going? and when shall I see you again? Alas! I do not know myself, replied Malvina, weeping. I have been indulging the hope, that when I left this place, the enchanting retreat to which I was going, would have compensated for the regret I should have felt on leaving you, my dear friend. But all, every hope is vanished, one moment has deprived me of them. I am a wanderer without a home, without a protector; I know not where I ought to direct my steps. I am uncertain whether I am to leave you, or whether I may not return and expire on

your bosom! But where do you
morrow? demanded Mrs. St. Clar
the greatest earnestness; why ca
accompany you?

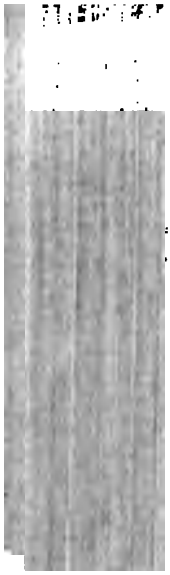
Ah! exclaimed Malvina, do y
lieve he would not imagine that I
to expose his grief, and would th
taking a witness with me an insul
Who is this person? asked Mrs. St
In the name of Heaven, of whom
speaking? Of him who possesses
affection, cried Malvina, of hi
occupies all my heart. Has he
nounced every thing for me;
titles, and the world? and when
pects to receive my hand, will on
from my lips an eternal adieu, wh
only terminate with life. You al
terrify me, Malvina, replied M
Clare, more and more agitated
quickly inform me, I conjure yo
me who is the happy being that p

[redacted]? Is it not Sir Ed-
mon?

ho but him is worthy? exclaimed
with a degree of enthuſiaſm.
uld I conceal a ſentiment which
e? Yes, it is he alone whom I
l who muſt ever poſſeſs my heart.
: been thine Edmond, my life
ave been a continued bleſſing;
if I muſt in future live without
ee more; rather let me ſink into
: tom.

hat have you ſaid, dear unhap-
rtunate woman? exclaimed Mrs.
:, in an agony of tears. Is it to
man, that the gentle, the tender
has given her heart, is to this
is wretch that ſhe wiſhes to unite
elic mind; and is it to Sir Ed-
arton that ſhe wiſhes to go to-
? No, Malvina, you ſhall not
o duty ought to carry you there,

but



my beloved and innocent frie
acquaint you with every thi
is yet time for it? To you a
reveal this fatal ſecret.—Yo
the ſhades of death ſurround
you will behold the coffin wh
cloſes the ſweet companion of
days, who was mowed down
of life, by the vile ſeductio
Edmond.

I do not wiſh to hear or
thing, ſaid Malving, riſing
ſome diſtance from Mrs. St.
have promiſed that I would no

to be ſullied by ſuch a crime:
le world was united againſt
ord, one look from Sir Ed-
d make me diſcredit them all.
agine that you can prevent
him to-morrow, I will go,
poſſible, endeavour, by the ut-
neſs to alleviate and urge him
, in the painful trial which
ty compels me to perform. I
me time determined to ſepa-
from Sir Edmond; yet, that
de me to believe her who
ries to ſcandaliſe him.

t Edmond, interrupted Mrs.
eeping, were you really born
ment, by what fatality is it,
inuating arts muſt ever ſtrike
neareſt and dearest to my
as it not ſufficient to have
of a ſiſter, without adding
ed of Malvina?

This

This was uttered in ſuch a
and affecting manner, that it tou
ſoul of Malvina; and ſhe was
affected, that ſhe threw herſelf
arms of Mrs. St. Clare, who
preſſed her to her boſom, a
mingled their tears in ſilence
and each feared to interrupt it
might diſunite them again.

However alarmed Mrs. S
was at the ſymptom with
paſſion had inſpired Malvina, ſ
that it was in vain to attempt to
it by reaſon: the knowledge ſhe
Sir Edmond occaſioned her t
her fair friend as his victim;
conſidered it as her duty to en
to ſave her if poſſible. For this
ſhe was confident ſhe muſt uſe
forcible means, by powerfully
upon the imagination, and touch
heart; ſhe knew this was t

robable way of accompliſhing what ſhe eſired.

She therefore no longer attempted to iſſuade her from going, but only re-uеſted permiſſion to accompany her the ext day, part of the way. A ſacred uty, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, calls me to ſſiſt a friend, which lies in your way, here I ſhall ſtay while the carriage akes you to Kenroſs; and ſince you are etermined to leave Sir Edmond, you an reſign your little charge to me; and e can both wait your return at the ame place where you will take leave f us.

Malvina thought this arrangement erfectly agreeable; it was therefore greed that they ſhould ſet out the next orning at eight o'clock.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

THOUGH Mrs. St. C was perfectly satisfied with the plan had formed, yet she was rather alar at the effect it might produce on M vina. This anxiety prevented her f sleeping part of the night; and w with the sun, she strolled into the gar to reflect more maturely whether could conscientiously justify herself

he ſtep ſhe was about to take. But all theſe reflections only ſerved to confirm er in the goodneſs of her intention; nd ſhe anxiouſly wiſhed to ſet out.

The clock had ſtruck eight, and Malna not appearing, Mrs. St. Clare beme uneaſy, and going up to her chamr, ſhe found her ſeated on the bed, in e ſame dreſs that ſhe had worn the preding evening; ſhe appeared motionleſs, th her eyes caſt down. Her countenance had no longer that ſweet, gentle, d penſive expreſſion, which added arms to her whole appearance. Inad of this intereſting tout en ſemble, e appeared oppreſſed by a gloomy jection, which had altered her in a ſt ſurpriſing manner. The ravages the paſſions are totally different from e tender regrets of friendſhip; and ey too often leave the traces of their ogreſs on the countenance for life.—

They

They undermine the soul, [illegible] to volcano, which consumes while it burn and creates so frightful a void, that cold hand of death can alone extin it. Malvina had passed the night anticipating all the distressful strug which she expected to undergo the e ing day. Thus, she had already suff nearly as much as the evil she app hended; and her destiny was prepa heavy sorrows yet to come.

Oh! why was she not one of the beings, whose inactive mind never div into the future, who never knew wh reflection or presentiment meant? h who, when it is day, never think of t morrow, or remember evening till th see it dark.

Mrs. St. Clare taking Malvina's arm conducted her to the carriage, and g ting in after her, she took Frances on h lap. She was sometimes tempted to r

prom

reach herſelf for deceiving Malvina; at the next moment ſhe was pleaſed with the idea of ſaving her. Mrs. St. Clare was abſorbed by her own reflections; while her melancholy companion purſuing the image of Sir Edmond, [illegible] his deſpair, and every other circumſtance that could depreſs her mind, did make her loſe the remembrance of her preſent ſituation, or where ſhe was going.

After they had travelled near two hours, ſhe at laſt noticed that they were not in the ſame road which led from Mrs. St. Clare's. Stupendous mountains enclioned them on every ſide, and the carriage rolled through a gloomy and ſolitary glen. Where are we going? inquired Malvina, haſtily. To the houſe I mentioned to you, replied her companion, a little agitated; as it lies out of the great road, we were obliged to take a croſs one to reach it.

I fear

I fear it will detain me later than I wiſh, ſaid Malvina, with viſible anxiety. Edmond will be waiting for me. Ah! replied Mrs. St. Clare, mournfully; do not pity him; let him to day experience a few of thoſe torments which he has ſo often occaſioned the innocent to ſuffer. Heaven, in its juſtice, will ſome time make him feel what he deſerves.—I will not go any farther, exclaimed Malvina. I will get out of the carriage, madam, if I am obliged to go on foot, without a guide or ſupport; no power on earth ſhall prevent me from going to the un happy being who expects me.

Do not make yourſelf the leaſt un eaſy my dear, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, ſup preſſing her agitation; this road is not ſo much out of your way as you imagine and the houſe I ſhall ſtop at, is not more than an hour's drive from Kenroſs. Mal vina believed her: in about a quarter of an hour they ſtopped at a farm, which

in the moſt lonely ſituation ima-
. While the horſes were reſting,
Clare deſired Malvina to remark
houſe, that ſhe might know it again
er return; and taking her arm with-
waiting her reply, they went towards
ck which was very ſteep, and its
were decorated with feſtoons of
bles, and a variety of wild flowers,
h partly concealed a ſmall door,
with great art in the rock. Mrs.
lare put her hand under a projecting
to reach a ſtring which belonged
ell.

on after, a little child about ſeven
old, opened the door, and ſaid,
Mrs. Cecilia, how good you are
ne juſt now—my poor mother is ſo
ill, that we think ſhe is going to
Oh! my God, let us haſten to her,
Mrs. St. Clare, ruſhing in with ſuch
pitation that ſhe forgot to faſten the
. She was ſoon after met by a
middle

middle aged woman, who, lifting her hands to Heaven on beholding St. Clare, ſaid, bleſſed be the chance which has conducted you here, madam; my poor miſtreſs has been ſo extremely ill all night, that ſhe believed herſelf dying, and requeſted that we ſhould ſend for a prieſt to be with her in her laſt moments. We luckily met with one at Kenroſs, and he is at preſent with her. She is rather better now, and I will go and prepare her; for your arrival will rejoice her. That is very proper, Mary, replied Mrs. St. Clare, ſo agitated ſhe could ſcarcely articulate a word. I will wait in the next room, and you will acquaint me when I may be admitted.

Mary went inſtantly; and Mrs. St. Clare taking Malvina's hand, led her to the caſement. Do you notice this dismal retreat? ſaid ſhe—this gloomy ſolitude; but infinitely leſs ſo than the ſoul of her who inhabits it. Would you not imagine

gine that every thing was moiſtened
? and that the very air was im-
nated with grief? Do you not hear
groans of that unfortunate, who is
haps now expiring? Do you gueſs
this dying victim is? It is my
r, my friend, ſhe who lives in my
rt. Do you know who is her mur-
r, and the father of that child?—
Sir Edmond.

h! why did I not expire before I
d it? exclaimed Malvina, with an
iſed ſhriek, and ſinking into a chair,
ly deprived of life. At this noiſe,
or ſuddenly opened, and a man
ed into the room, crying, it certainly
her that I heard, if I may believe
ſenſes? It is her, it is Malvina,
m I behold. By what ſtrange fatality
, that I find you in this houſe of
rning?

Edmond, Edmond, what have done? exclaimed Malvina, ſobbing had not perceived the entrance of Prior: alas, you have then deceive What name is that you have juſt tioned, aſked Mr. Prior? Can ſu perfidious man be yet dear to you. I have not a doubt but it is the ha the Almighty which has conducted to her; whoſe ſorrows and ſuffe will give you a more juſt idea o character of Sir Edmond.

Ah! Mr. Prior, it is not now a p time; whatever Sir Edmond ma my lot is ever to love him; an crimes cannot tear him from my Unhappy being! ſhe continued, w ſource of remorſe has he accumu on his head; where will he find a hand to ſoothe him under it? Sir, Mrs. St. Clare to Mr. Prior, wh peared much aſtoniſhed at what Ma had inadvertently uttered. Since I unexpe

unexpectedly met ſo eſtimable a character, who alſo poſſeſſes the eſteem and confidence of this intereſting creature, remain with her; and like the angel of peace, ſpeak comfort to her ſoul. Prevent her, if you can, from ruſhing into that fatal gulph, which will in the end, overwhelm her. Endeavour to fortify her mind, and rouſe it to that noble love of virtue, which a fatal paſſion ſeems nearly to have annihilated. I am going into the next room.—I am going to wipe away the tears of another. Oh! may Malvina never have reaſon to ſhed ſuch tears of bitter repentance.

Mr. Prior permitted Mrs. St. Clare to depart without returning an anſwer. Then, looking ſteadily at Malvina, who appeared abſorbed by grief; after a long ſilence, he exclaimed, Was it in ſuch a ſituation, O Heaven, that I was to behold my friend again; giving way to an unruly paſſion, without bluſhing at the

ſelection of her heart, and daring publicly to avow it; who has not even a word to beſtow on a friend who has been ſo long abſent from her?

Is it then really true that the friendſhip of a woman is only the phantom of a few days? which blooms only like a flower, and which is alas, as ſoon withered, and which flies like the ſhadows of the field; to render that mind a prey to anguiſh; whoſe deep and unchanging ſenſibility, time, place, diſtance, and ſuch impalpable things can never alter. Ah! Malvina, why are you ſilent? Are you even a ſtranger to pity? Alas! I only ſupported a painful exiſtence by the hope of ſeeing you again; and I now behold you in a ſituation which renders me infinitely more wretched.

What would you have me ſay? replied Malvina, with gloomy calmneſs. I have nothing to offer you, do not longer

think

of friendſhip, or any thing elſe:
t not know that all is deſtroyed?
d has deceived me. What, ex-
l Mr. Prior, with quickneſs, be-
ıe is falſe, do you imagine there
t any who are ſincere? and that
is capable of friendſhip, becauſe
y are deceitful? Ah! Mr. Prior,
I have loſt all the happineſs I
in this world, of what conſe-
: is the reality of any other?

Malvina, what have you aſſerted;
ndſhip is from henceforth indif-
to you, and you no longer eſteem
Yet, I ſhall hope, ſaid he, raiſing
ıds towards Heaven, I ſhall find
, in thee, O my God; oh! deign to
own on me, and pity me; for I am
ed of comfort, and my ſoul is
affliſted. Ah! Mr. Prior, ſaid
ıa, forgive me, if I have been the
ın of a moments pain; but, added
reſſing both her hands upon her

heart, there is not any room here for confidence or belief, or any place to love any thing.

Oh! dear Malvina, ſaid Mr. Prior, ſeizing one of her hands, and bathing it with his tears; ah! why will you thus torture me by thoſe words? But, no, no, I will not believe you; your unhappy friend cannot have become quite a ſtranger to you. A merciful Creator adapts our ſorrows to the ſtrength we poſſeſs to ſupport them. Ah! do we not rather fear thoſe only, which are inſupportable? replied Malvina, with the moſt melancholy tone and manner; yet there is nevertheleſs.—— She had ſcarcely pronounced theſe words, when a haſty ſtep announced the approach of ſome perſon. The door was ſuddenly opened, and Sir Edmond appeared before them.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE STORM OF THE PASSIONS.

SIR Edmond drew back amazement, on obſerving Mr. Prior Malvina; and then ſtanding motion- for ſome moments, he exclaimed, at God, am I then under an illuſion; poſſible that Malvina has betrayed Edmond, is it you? you here! would have ſaid, but he did not give time to finiſh the ſentence; but inter- ting her with vehemence, he ſaid, Take

care Malvina, of uttering a wo
making a ſign that may recall
myſelf; do not let me know that
awake; for my revenge ſhall be as
ful as the tortures which has occa
it.

And on whom is your fury t
ſaid Mr. Prior, haughtily, going
him. On thee, replied Sir Ed
trembling with rage; on thee, wh
robbed me of Malvina's love; an
life ſhall anſwer for this perjury.
follow me, putting a piſtol into his
I muſt have blood to ſatisfy my d
What are you going to do, crue
mond? cried Malvina, flying afte
and holding him with both her
What is it that you ſuſpect? what
that you dare to ſay? violent and
rous man. Look and recollect
you are, bluſh for yourſelf, and d
judge of Malvina's heart by thy ow

The noiſe which this ſcene occaſioned, ſoon drew Mrs. St Clare into the room. She appeared, and perceiving Sir Edmond, ſhe exclaimed, Oh! merciful Providence, is it then as a puniſhment for his guilt, that thou haſt ſent here the murderer of Louiſa, to witneſs the laſt ſighs of his victim? Is this the place where Louiſa is? ſaid Sir Edmond, with a wildneſs in his manner. Am I then under the ſame roof with Louiſa? Is it here that Malvina came, without any regard to the promiſe ſhe made me never to become acquainted with this ſecret, from any one but myſelf? When I have been waiting for her on that very day which was to have ſeen us united; yet ſhe could forget her vows, deſpiſe her engagements, and betray her faith. When I have been expecting her with the moſt agoniſing anxiety, and finding it exceeded the promiſed hour, I vainly traverſed every road which ſhe was to have come; I queſtioned every one whom I met,

I met, and guided by one of them, I found her under the ſame roof with Louiſa, and alone with a deteſted rival. The puniſhments of hell are in my boſom, and I carry their torments in my heart.

Edmond, unhappy Edmond! exclaimed Malvina, the moſt dreadful of them is to be thus accuſed by thee; ſtop, oh! ſtop theſe unkind reproaches. Go, I have never ceaſed to love you; but do not look upon me, it freezes and oppreſſes my heart: even my life could not long ſuſtain thy anger. Ah! enquire of them? added ſhe, melting into tears, and pointing to Mrs. St. Clare and Mr. Prior. Unjuſt, though unworthily dear, hear from them, whether I have deceived you?

Malvina, irreſiſtible Malvina, exclaimed Sir Edmond, with quickneſs, you have conquered; for whatever appearances may indicate, I will not demand any other

xplanation, and I will believe you
thought that you had been brought
ithout your knowledge, that your
with Mr. Prior was entirely the
f chance; but the value I affix to
confidence which you only could
btained from me, is, that you will
his moment consent to be mine,
om this place follow me to the

my God, what is it that you ask
? exclaimed Malvina, retreating
m, and renewing her grief. Ah!
a, you fly me; you hesitate? re-
e, with a gloomy rage. In the
f Heaven, hear me, Edmond? said
a, let me acquaint you with the
ll motives which restrain me,
u will then find that the menaces
Sheridan have compelled me to
my promise.

I will not hear any thing, interrupted Sir Edmond; I shall depend on your affection: that I shall receive your hand from it alone. If you love me, not any consideration, or any power on earth ought to have the precedence of me. Ah! do not refuse my entreaties, adored Malvina: following and throwing himself at her feet. I feel that the idea of [illegible] will deprive me of reason; [illegible] cannot command my actions, [illegible] I tell to what their excess may reduce me; when you are the object [illegible], and the reward I wish to gain.

Pardon me, Malvina. I fear the violence of my behaviour shocks you; but remember, that love—love for you alone deranges me; and it is from that which I hope to obtain my pardon. Oh! thou best loved of my heart, let it be to love alone, that I am to be indebted for thy hand. Come then, my Malvina, do not delay any longer; give me your hand,

hand, and conſent to receive. On ſaying this, he folded her in his arms, and drew her without her having the power to conſent or defend herſelf.

Mr. Prior conſidered this proceeding evinced too much force, and happy to find a reaſon to prevent it, placed himſelf before Sir Edmond, to prevent his paſſing. What authority, ſaid he, have you to carry away that lady? And by what right dare you prevent me? replied Sir Edmond, trembling with rage. That right which the Deity has given to every one to relieve each other, and protect weakneſs, returned Mr. Prior. This lady is not your's, ſhe refuſes to follow you; did ſhe not tell you as much? Is this true? exclaimed Sir Edmond, Is this really true? Malvina, that you refuſe to follow me; Do you not belong to me? Are we not contracted to each other? Have you not acknowledged before Heaven and man, that you are my wife; the

the perpetual companion of my future life?

No, no, I cannot, replied Malvina, faintly. You cannot, Malvina, you cannot, and yet, only yeſterday, you conſented: Ah! have pity on thyſelf, and do not drive me to deſperation; for the proſpect of futurity is too horrible. Stop, interrupted ſhe, taking Lord Sheridan's letter from her boſom; read that fatal paper, and then judge if I am permitted to be your's. I will not look at it, ſaid Sir Edmond, tearing the paper to atoms, and puſhing Malvina ſo rudely from him, that Mrs. St. Clare had ſcarcely time to ſave her from falling.

I will not ſee, hear, or believe any thing; you are a mixture of perfidy and deceit. I ſent you that letter yeſterday, at the ſame time with mine, and it did not prevent you from ſending me your promiſe. But you have ſeen that man

and that is the reason why you
fulfill it. That is the whole;
uld I ſeek to know any farther?
had ſuch an aſcendency over
I conſented to forget every
ut you have now refuſed to fol-
Well, Malvina, you ſhall wit-
courſe of my revenge, which
as dreadful as my torments are;
I repent ſome day, when it is
too late, and when there has
odſhed.

ow, continued he, dragging Mr.
olently by the arm, come and
the juſt reward of thy deceit,
from me a life which this per-
oman has rendered hateful. On
hem both go out, Malvina flew
m; but though deſpair had
er additional ſtrength, ſhe had
cient to prevent two men, who
erpowered by rage and jealouſy.

Pale

Pale and terrified, ſhe followed and perhaps would have overtaken them, if they had not cloſed the door in the rock after them. She tried every method to open it, but in vain; a ſecret ſpring which ſhe did not underſtand, rendered all her endeavours abortive. She called after them as loud as poſſible, and then for ſome perſon to open the door.

Mrs. St. Clare was the firſt who came to her; and Frances, who had been, during theſe tranſactions, playing in the garden with little Edward, hearing Malvina's voice, came running to her, and wanted to go with her.

In the name of Heaven, ſaid Malvina, take away the child, giving her into the arms of Mrs. St. Clare; and prevent her from following or detaining me. Malvina had ſcarcely concluded theſe words, when they heard the report of piſtols at a little

CHAP. IV.

OF A MORE TENDER NATURE.

MRS. St. Clare, alarmed and agitated by her fears, confided Malvina to the care of Mary, and ran to the farm in order to ſend ſome relief to the place where they heard the report of the piſtols. She had not advanced above a hundred paces, when ſhe obſerved, at a little diſtance, ſome men, who were carrying a perſon between them; and ſeeing Prior coming towards her, ſhuddering,

xclaimed, He is killed then?
, a clergyman! your hands are
uman blood!

ut very ſlightly wounded, re-
Prior; but that is no relief to
ſhall ever conſider myſelf as a
Deſtruction appears to ſur-
on every ſide; and I feel as if
was riſen againſt me to publiſh
y. Where are they conveying
nd? enquired Mrs. St. Clare.
riage, replied Mr. Prior, which
er of a mile from hence; he
be taken there immediately.—
ot fearful that the motion of
e may be detrimental? No,
. Prior, the ball only grazed
r; and the bleeding was ſtop-
tly. Who are thoſe that are
ow? His ſervants, who were
the farm, one of whom un-
a little of ſurgery, aſſerted
ound would be cured in two
days.

days. No, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, we muſt not ſuffer him to go; I will go and order every thing for his reception at the farm, where he may be recovered without being moved.

It will be uſeleſs, replied Mr. Prior, for we have already uſed every effort for that purpoſe, which has been ineffectual, and only ſerved to irritate him; and the manner in which he inſiſted upon going was ſo deciſive, that his people dared not diſobey. But where is he going?—To Edinburgh.—So far! Never ſhall I be far enough from Malvina, ſaid he; and yet it is to Mrs. Burton that he deſires to be conveyed, that he may increaſe the hatred ſhe bears Malvina; and he will alſo be ſurrounded by her enemies. Oh! what a fatal preſent did Heaven beſtow on man, when it gave them ſuch violent paſſions, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare. But let this fury purſue his deſtiny, while I endeavour to recover his

two

nocent victims. As to you, Mr.
you muſt not appear before Mal-
ter this affair, ſhe will only behold
th horror.

exclaimed Mr. Prior, ſhuddering,
r it. Malvina hates me! I have—
l! who haſt made my days miſera-
nd before whom I am nothing.
lo not plunge me into ſtill greater
than that of being hated by
na!

. Prior, replied Mrs. St. Clare,
y, perhaps you have deſerved the
f that friendſhip which ſeems ſo
o you. Search the ſecret receſſes
ur heart, and it will inform you
er a bitter ſtream can run from a
ource; and if it had not been for
iendſhip of Malvina, do you not
you would have avoided this duel?
Mrs. St. Clare, interrupted Mr.
—do you not know that the time of
affliction

affliction is that of mercy alſo? then, at this moment, lay open quities of my heart; let me be at little while, that I may regain m tude, before I enter this retreat, t I can never again return.

No, Mr. Prior, replied Mrs. St it is not permitted us to die wl can be of uſe to one unfortunate Go into Louiſa, as the woman tends her, deceived her, relative noiſe which ſhe heard, be kind not to undeceive her; that ſhe may know Sir Edmond has been h Do not leave her while your pic hortations can recall her to life, her reſignation.

She immediately went to M whom ſhe found juſt as ſhe had le pale and inanimate. Frances was on her knees by her ſide, and Oh! my dear mama is ſo cold—ju

other mama:—Is ſhe then going to
alſo? Ah! pray do not let her
without me. Oh! let her take
nces with her, ſhe will be ſo glad to
me; and I will never, never leave my
mamma.

Mrs. St. Clare could not reſtrain her
at the ſight of this little innocent,
oſe exiſtence had occaſioned Malvina
many ſorrows; but wiſhing to prevent
young and artleſs mind from dwelling
long on the melancholy ſight of her
ther, ſhe deſired Mary to take her in
garden to play with Edward. But
nces, burſting into tears, hid herſelf
the bed curtains, crying no, no; I do
wiſh to be taken away, I had rather
here; and if I muſt go, we will all
together. I can remember when they
ied me from my other mama, and I
never ſeen her ſince. Oh, pray let
ay here, I beg of you—I will keep
corner—and I will not make the
leaſt

leaſt noiſe, nor cry any more. The lit-
tle creature immediately began to wipe
her eyes, ſcarcely daring to breathe, le
they ſhould ſend her away.

Mrs. St. Clare let her remain in the
room, and endeavoured, by every me-
thod, to recover Malvina; which, after
ſome time, ſhe accompliſhed. The in-
ſtant ſhe recovered her ſenſes, ſhe ſtarted
from her ſeat;—ſhe looked wildly round
the room, exclaiming, where is he?—
where is he?—Do not alarm yourſelf,
my dear Malvina, he is not in the leaſt
danger, you may believe me, for I would
not deceive you. Why then does he not
appear? replied ſhe, with quickneſs. He
is not here, he chooſes to return to
Edinburgh. Ah! that is certainly to
avoid me! My dear Malvina, he does
avoid you, becauſe he ſuppoſes you
guilty; but you can eaſily undeceive him.
Let his paſſion have time to cool; and
endeavour to compoſe yourſelf. Me!—

Me

!—What! ſhall I ſtay to repoſe my-
; when he thinks me guilty? No,
dam, I wiſh to depart inſtantly—I will
ow him.

lut, my dear, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, it
now two hours ſince he ſet out for
inburgh; and he is gone to Mrs.
ton's. Why do you think ſo? aſked
lvina—he does not live with her. Be-
ſe he deſired to be conveyed——To
conveyed; Ah! he is then wounded;
y ſlightly. Edmond is wounded—
it is at Mrs. Burton's he is going to

He will not die, my dear Malvina;
s only a ſlight fleſh wound. No
ter, I wiſh to go, whatever may be
ituation, or wherever he is, nothing
l prevent my ſeeing him.

Vell, my dear, you ſhall go, replied
. St. Clare, who perceived it was in
i to perſuade her from her determi-

nation; but the evening is now clofi
in, and theſe mountainous roads are ve
dangerous, and quite impaſſable in t
dark; therefore, if the carriage ſhou
meet with any accident, that will impe
your journey. Wait then till to-morro
my horſes ſhall be ready as early as y
pleaſe in the morning, to take you
Kinroſs; when there, you will be ſuppli
with others to convey you to Edinbur
I would attend you, if the dear unfor
nate who is here did not claim all my
tention; but I will take care of yo
little girl, which would be rather inc
venient on your journey.

On hearing this, Frances came fr
behind the curtain, where ſhe had c
cealed herſelf; and kiſſing the hand
Malvina; mama, ſaid ſhe, pray do
go without me, they wanted me to lea
you juſt now, when you was almoſt
dead as my other mama, and now y

e that has prevented your dying, be-
ufe I ſtayed. Oh! mama, pray always
eep me with you.

Malvina, affected by her voice and
anner, looked at the child; and mark-
g the ſame ſweet expreſſion in her eyes,
hich had once animated thoſe of her
other, her tears fell in profuſion at the
membrance of their friendſhip.

Clara! exclaimed Malvina, dear Clara—
h, what moment can ever be more fatal
an that which ſeparated us? Alas! when
loſt thee, I fancied I ſhould never have
y thing more to weep for than thy
ath; little did I imagine that this mis-
rtune alone would be the ſource of all
y diſtreſſes. Ah! my beloved friend,
eaven, which had formed us to live
gether, poured its wrath upon me when
dared to be happy without thee. But
ce it prohibits me from a happineſs
hich you cannot now partake with me,

nation; but the evening
in, and theſe mountain
dangerous, and quit
dark; therefore, i
meet with any a
your journey.
my horſes
pleaſe in
Kinroſs;
with o
I wo
nat
t
calm moments; and that th
rally preceded by tears.
deceived; for thoſe which
ſhed ſo profuſely, relieved
again ſhe became the tende
Malvina; and folding her
Mrs. St. Clare, I fear, ſhe
hurt you much? No, replie
it is I who ought to be fe
and I have to-day been cor
are ſome particular incide

CHAP. V.

THE ROAD TO EDINBURGH.

DAY had but juſt partially ightened the ſurrounding ſcenery, en Malvina enquired if her friend's riage was ready to take her to Kin-s. Mrs. St. Clare promiſed that if ſhe ſhould prolong her ſtay in aburgh, ſhe would join her with nces, as ſoon as her ſiſter's health uld permit her to leave her. At this thet, Malvina looked at her ſteadily,

and preſſing her hand; do not imagine, ſaid ſhe, that I ſhall forget you have a ſiſter; or the right ſhe has over the man I am now going to? I am only going to him that I may vindicate my conduct: but the inſtant he has acknowledged my innocence, I ſhall leave him for ever.

You think ſo juſt now, replied Mrs. St. Clare; but when you behold him intreating at your feet, all theſe reſolutions will vaniſh. As to any thing on my account, my dear Malvina, if I wiſhed ſo earneſtly, that you might be fortunate enough to renounce him, it was entirely on account of your peace and happineſs; that alone was the ſole motive; not for any thing which can regard my ſiſter. My unhappy Louiſa is dead to the world; the ſecret of her being yet in exiſtence, is only known to Edmond and myſelf. Even thoſe who attend her, are not acquainted with who ſhe is.

Why

e; if he was informed ſhe was living, would uſurp all his authority over , and this would be to immure her in an ominious wretchedneſs, and her only ſolation, her child, her Edmond, ld be taken from her. And why ld not your father vindicate his ununate daughter?

ſy father is very good, but ſevere and xible where his honor is concerned. new that Louiſa was guilty, he bleshe hour of her death: but if he had wn that ſhe had deceived him, he ld not have ſaved her from the vence of her huſband. And can your r yet be ignorant of the exiſtence

ly Sir Edmond in ſome meaſure compenſates by his benevolence for.—

Do you imagine, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, that my ſiſter would condeſcend to accept of any thing from her ſeducer? No, no, it is I alone who have the inexpreſſible felicity of providing for all her wants. I obſerve your aſtoniſhment; as my ſituation with my father ſeems to put it entirely out of my power; but have you quite forgot thoſe works which you reproached me for?—This is my excuſe.

On hearing this, Malvina melted into tears, and preſſed Mrs. St. Clare in her arms; who thus continued, juſtice forces me to ſay, that Edmond is not what he was formerly; his pride appears to be leſſened, and he does not bluſh to ſubmit to a woman; he loves at laſt! Though I may deteſt the frenzy of his paſſion, I believe it is ſincere. Malvina,

if you do not fear the being unhappy with him? Ah! what ſhould render me unhappy? replied ſhe, provided he continued to love me! Poor creature! exclaimed Mrs. St. Clare, looking at her with the moſt tender ſolicitude. What an unbounded paſſion muſt that be which could dictate ſuch a reply!

But this child, Mrs. St. Clare, this child of Sir Edmond's, is its exiſtence known alſo? He now muſt ſubmit to the ſame deſtiny as his mother: when my unhappy ſiſter gave him birth, her huſband was ignorant that he was not the ſon of him, and both would have been the victims of his rage, if by a particular artifice, too long at preſent to relate, I had not been fortunate enough to prevent it. But I wiſh to leave Edmond the means of expiating his fault, by confeſſing it at your feet.

As this tragical recital, may perhaps awaken his remorſe; cauſe him to bluſh at his conduct, give him a deteſtation of vice, and render him, if poſſible, worthy of your love. I ſincerely wiſh it, Malvina, for his tenderneſs for you, has in a great meaſure eradicated the hatred which I felt towards him. Malvina deeply penetrated by this kindneſs, once more preſſed Mrs. St. Clare in her arms, then tearing herſelf from her, kiſſed, and bidding her adieu, ſtepped into the carriage, and departed for Kinroſs.

On arriving there, ſhe took a poſt-chaiſe, and the next evening arrived at Falkirk, at the ſame inn where the preceding month ſhe had been met by Sir Edmond. On entering it, ſhe trembled ſo much, that ſhe could ſcarcely get up ſtairs, which being obſerved by the girl of the Inn, ſhe offered her arm to aſſiſt her. The lady ſeems but poorly, ſaid ſhe, what a pity that the handſomeſt and richeſt

richeſt perſons ſhould always be either melancholy or ill!

"Have you many here then?" ſaid Malvina, careleſsly. "Pardon me, madam, I cannot ſay exactly, for as I have only been here fifteen days, you may ſuppoſe I have not had time to ſee many; but I was thinking of a young gentleman who was here yeſterday, juſt as handſome as yourſelf, madam, but ſo melancholy, and ſo dull, that he ſighed enough to break ones heart." Was he wounded? interrupted Malvina, with quickneſs. Oh! my God, yes; but dear me, madam, how could you know it?

"No matter, only inform me how he is?" Why, madam, the ſurgeon who has been to ſee him, ſays, that he will not die. What! that he will not die? replied Malvina, alarmed. Yes, madam, ſo he thinks if the fever does not increaſe, for then.——What then? ſaid Malvina, trembling.

trembling. Oh! madam, he is a very ſkilful man, is Doctor Sandwich; and yet he ſaid with all his ſkill, he could not tell how to ſave him if the delirium continued. What! is he delirious? Yes, madam, and he ſays ſuch ſtrange things, that nobody can underſtand what they mean.—He talks ſo loud to himſelf, and ſeems ſo angry with ſome woman, who, he ſays, wiſhed to kill him; he calls her ungrateful and perfidious, and a great many other vile names; then afterwards he ſays he loves her, begs her to come to him, and ſays, he ſhould be contented if he only ſaw her once more.

I will go directly, ſaid Malvina! Ah! good gracious, at this hour? replied Peggy, aſtoniſhed; I thought that you would have ſlept here, madam? No, I wiſh to go directly to Edinburgh. But, madam, you will arrive there in the middle of the night, and all the inns will be ſhut. No matter, I ſhall be nearer to him.

him. You know the young gentleman then, madam? That is of no conſequence to you Peggy, your buſineſs is to order me a chaiſe immediately. But madam, had you not better reſt one moment, here is a room quite ready, which that gentleman laſt night occupied? Let me ſee it, ſaid Malvina; in hopes of finding ſome traces of Edmond: ſhe perceived that it was the very ſame room where a month before they had paſſed ſome of the happieſt moments of their lives.

The impreſſion this recollection occaſioned, very nearly overpowered her; and leaning her hand againſt the ſofa, ſhe deſired Peggy to fetch her a glaſs of water; and putting a few drops into it, ſhe recovered; and abſolutely determined to be in Edinburgh that night, and ſent Peggy to order the chaiſe immediately. She carefully ſearched every part of the room, in hopes of finding

ſome

ſome paper which might have been left by Sir Edmond; ſhe then examined the windows, to ſee if ſhe could find a line or word expreſſive of his grief; but not finding any, ſhe was convinced that he was too ill to write. Her anxiety increaſed every moment, and her ſickly imagination tortured her with the moſt alarming fears; though her reaſon condemned this, her heart conſtrued them as a preſentiment of misfortune.

Affection is acknowledged to be liable to ſuperſtitious fears, and thoſe who have experienced real misfortunes, are apt to imagine all they fear may be realiſed. The terrors of Malvina ſeemed to increaſe with the ſhades of night; the murmuring of the wind, the ſhrieks of the owl, the dull reverberation of a bell, the very echo, and the diſtant ſound of voices, all appeared to her diſeaſed mind, omens of death. Incapable of ſupporting theſe horrors any longer, ſhe ruſhed

out

out of the room, and ran down ſtairs to ſee if the chaiſe was ready. But all her endeavours were ineffectual; the maſter of the inn was drinking, his wife ſcolding, and the ſervants running backward and forward, quarrelling with each other. Malvina ſaw the impoſſibility of making herſelf heard amidſt ſuch a noiſy ſcene; ſhe was therefore obliged to defer her journey 'till the next day, and conſequently ſhe would not reach Edinburgh before eleven the next morning.

CHAP

CHAP. VI.

ILLNESS.

MALVINA desired to be ſet down at Mrs. Moody's, whoſe houſe was not very diſtant from Mrs. Burton's. This good woman, who had never forgot the eſſential ſervice which ſhe had received from Malvina, was both ſurpriſed and rejoiced to ſee her benefactreſs. Malvina checked her proteſta-

tion, and held her finger on her lips as a token

n, certainly, madam, ſaid Mrs.
y, you ſhall be obeyed. But may
at leaſt know the cauſe which
ought you to me? Well, you
be informed. I ſhall even require
aſſiſtance, if you will oblige me
? You may depend upon me,
replied the good woman. I
eem myſelf happy, if I can be
leaſt uſe to you. Sit down by
my dear Moody, ſaid Malvina,
ut doubt you have heard of my
g my couſin? Yes, madam, I
it from the ſervants, particularly

wept at your departure. But, ſaid Malvina, as you are no ſtranger to what has paſſed, I ſuppoſe they did not forget to inform you that Sir Edmond is dear to ———.

Mrs. Moody nodded aſſent, and Malvina continued—I do not pretend to diſguiſe it, Moody; for it is but too true that he is very dear to me. Both at our own diſpoſal, we were on the point of being united, when a dreadful circumſtance occurred, which entirely prevented it. Since he has been wounded—Well, madam, ſaid Mrs. Moody, obſerving Malvina's tears, what is to be done? only tell me, I am ready to undertake any thing.

I wiſh to know firſt, Moody, if he is at preſent with Mrs. Burton? He arrived there yeſterday morning, madam; and I heard that Mrs. Burton was very much ſurpriſed to ſee him return in ſuch a ſituation; and that after abuſing you very

very much, ſhe was taken very ill; and the phyſician, which was ſent for to her nephew, attended her great part of the morning.

But did you hear what was ſaid of Sir Edmond's ſituation?—Do they ſay his wound will prove dangerous? No, madam; it would not have been the leaſt ſo, if his fever had not been occaſioned by the violent perturbation of his mind. Ah! gracious Heaven, it is then I who am ſending him to his grave. My dear Moody, endeavour to be informed how he is at preſent, as I wiſh to know what he feels; and particularly if he enquires for me. As I would dare any thing, I will go to Mrs. Burton, and intreat her to let me ſee him, for the laſt time.

Oh! my dear madam, replied Mrs. Moody, do not thus alarm yourſelf, I will go immediately to your couſin's, and

enquire

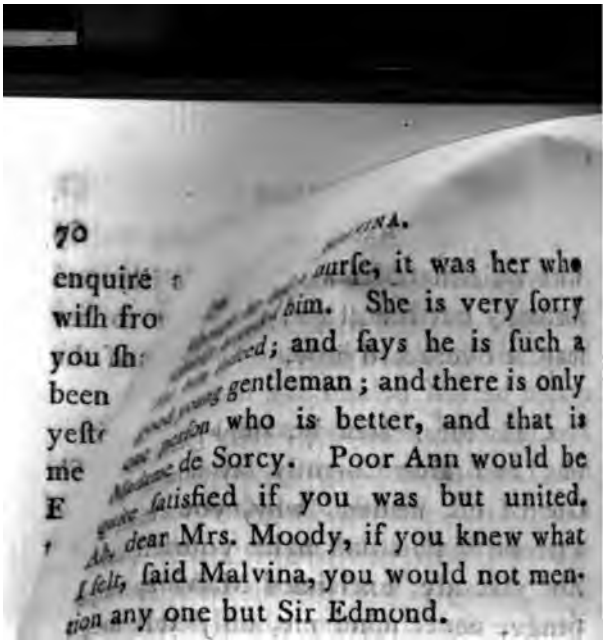
enquire all the particulars which you wiſh from Ann; and in leſs than an hour you ſhall be acquainted with all that has been ſaid and done in the houſe ſince yeſterday. Ah! ſaid Malvina, only let me know the particulars relative to Sir Edmond; the reſt are of no conſequence to me?. Mrs. Moody replied that ſhe might depend on her zeal and delicacy in the management of this affair.

The ſituation of Malvina may eaſily be imagined, during the abſence of Mrs. Moody; and the pain of ſuſpence, which occaſioned her to fancy ſhe ſtaid longer than the time propoſed, increaſed her fears. She was continually walking to and from the window, counting the minutes, fancying time had made a pauſe in his flight. At laſt, Mrs. Moody returned, and went very leiſurely up ſtairs, where Malvina had come to meet her.—Well, Mrs. Moody, how is he? ſaid ſhe, with

th quickneſs. I am going to tell you, adam; but I muſt go in with you—we ay be overheard here.

Oh! Mrs. Moody, only ſpeak, one ord is ſufficient—only ſay how he is? ood God, madam, why, you are all of trembie, you will make yourſelf ill.— h! Moody, exclaimed Malvina, impa- ntly, never mind me, only tell me, I g of you, how Sir Edmond is now? hy, madam, you muſt know that I am l that the phyſician, this morning, r feeling his pulſe, examined his eyes, ed at his wounds, ſhook his head, did not ſpeak. Said nothing, and k his head, Moody; did not any aſk him a queſtion? As to that, n, I cannot ſay; Ann did not fol- e doctor out of the room.

what have you heard then? I am y tell you; at firſt, madam, Ann left Sir Edmond's chamber; for though



Pardon me, madam; this morning his fever increaſed ſo much that he was delirious, at leaſt Ann ſuppoſed ſo, as ſhe could not believe that you had wiſhed Mr. Prior to kill Sir Edmond, which he accuſed you of; and then again, he calls you Malvina, his dear Malvina! He then intreats that you will not refuſe his prayers, and ſays, that the altar is ready; and then he immediately begins to tear the bandages from his wound, ſaying, his death alone would pleaſe you. However, yeſterday evening he had a calm

interval,

terval, when Mrs. Burton took the opportunity of ſeeing him, and Ann overheard all their converſation; for ſhe concealed herſelf behind the folding ſcreen. Mrs. Burton ſeated herſelf by his bedſide, and after ſlightly enquiring the ſtate of his health, ſhe ſaid to him, I hope we ſhall at laſt agree on one point, now you are convinced of the ſpirit of intrigue and coquetry which Madame de Sorcy has evinced; that you will entirely obliterate her from your remembrance, and only recollect thoſe engagements which I have made for you with Lord Stafford, as this is the only condition upon which I will forgive you.

Then, madam, I ſhall forfeit your pardon, ſaid Sir Edmond, with a voice of anger; for I will never give my hand to any other woman. What! replied Mrs. Burton, with an impatience which ſhe could not conceal; what! do you renounce every woman, becauſe you have

been deceived by the artifices of ——. Madam, interrupted Sir Edmond, I am but too ſenſible Madame de Sorcy has deceived me, for that reaſon I ought to deteſt her; and it was from a motive of revenge to her, that in the firſt moment of my anger I deſired to be brought here, hoping that ſuch a ſtep would render her as miſerable as myſelf. If I had thought my blood would have coſt her one tear, I would have ſhed it all. But, added he, after a pauſe of a few moments, however I may deteſt her crimes, I will never permit any lips but mine to reproach her, even with a ſhadow of blame. I only have that right — ſhe has injured only me! every one elſe ought to revere her; and while the breath of life animates me, no one ſhall dare to treat her with leſs reſpect than ſhe merits.

Oh! dear Edmond, exclaimed Malvina, melting into tears, when you ſuppoſe me guilty of the blackeſt deceit,

can

can you vindicate me with such generous energy? and would readily expose your life for my sake, at the time you believed that I wished your death. How shall I ever repay the generosity of such a noble heart, and make those blush who can doubt thy virtues? But proceed, Moody—what said Mrs. Burton?

She appeared very much enraged, madam, but endeavoured to suppress it; and told her nephew that she hoped his baron would return with his health; and he should wait for that moment, to come to a conclusion with him relative to the fair in question. She then took leave of him, and very coolly desired him to hold all those ideas which might affect him too much, and retard his recovery.

Ann, observing she departed with a threatening aspect, followed her on tip-toe, and perceived Mrs. Fenwick run-

ning to meet her. Well, madam, ſaid ſhe, what ſays Sir Edmond? A greater fool than ever, Kitty. What! ſaid Mrs. Fenwick, will he not relinquiſh, and avoid her? Perhaps not, replied Mrs. Burton; but I am certain of ſeparating them, and then it will be of no conſequence whether they love each other or not.

But in what manner will you draw him back to Lady Mary Summerhill, if Madame de Sorcy continues to be ſo very dear to him? They were ſoon out of hearing—Ann therefore could not hear the concluſion of this converſation. I could not help enquiring, madam, why Mrs. Fenwick was ſo inveterate againſt you. Ah! dear Mrs. Moody, replied Ann, every one here is for ever endeavouring to deceive each other; and thoſe who poſſeſs moſt art, are thoſe who gain moſt belief.

Mrs.

Mrs. Fenwick once hoped that Sir Edmond would have married her; and, perhaps, he might, if he had not liked Madame de Sorcy better; and every body muſt be of his opinion. But ſhe is ſo enraged at having loſt him, that it is from that cauſe ſhe aggravates Mrs. Burton againſt them, and is perpetually talking of Lady Mary Summerhill, whom ſhe deteſts in her heart.

This is quite ſatisfactory, dear Moody; do not deſire to hear any more of her; and from what you have ſaid of Mrs. Fenwick, I now have not a doubt but I have been the object of her revenge ever ſince ſhe was married.

Well, madam, I have informed you of what I have heard; and I can aſſure you, that has ſpoken the truth; for ſhe told me I heard many things from Jenny, from whom Mrs. Fenwick communicates all

her thoughts. There is not any thing, replied Malvina, that paſſes in that houſe, except what relates to Sir Edmond, that is of any importance to me. With your leave, Mrs. Moody, I wiſh to be alone; I ſhall not go out, and hope you will not mention me to any perſon; let me hear, as frequently as poſſible, how Sir Edmond is.

The remainder of the day was paſſed with tranquillity, and ſhe heard nothing more concerning Sir Edmond. At night ſhe was diſturbed by diſagreeable dreams; if ſleep does not ſuſpend pleaſure, there are diſtreſſes which it cannot ever relieve. They are a part of ourſelves, which wear and corrode to life's latest hour.

When we are covered by the mantle of ſleep, our ideas are ignorant from whence the evil proceeds; but the heart, while

: it beats, will ever feel them.—It
only ceaſe to ſuffer, when we ceaſe
tiſt.

CHAP. VII.

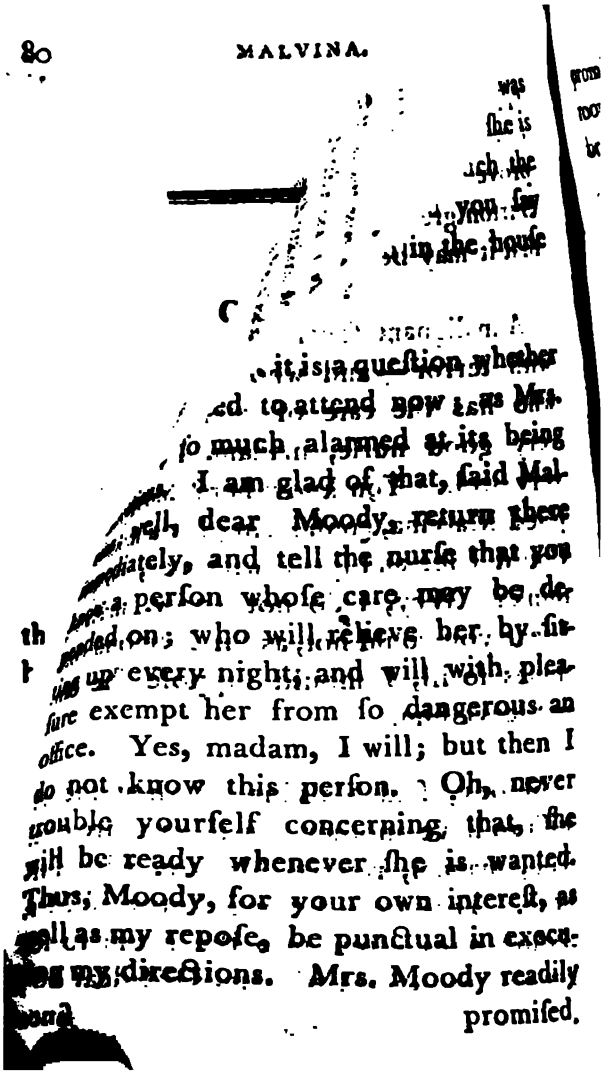
NEW ALARMS.

MALVINA, more fatigued than relieved by a tireſome night, had but juſt aroſe, when Mrs. Moody entered with her breakfaſt. Well, madam, ſaid ſhe, with an air of ſatisfaction, I was very certain that what I told you was all true. Is he then ſuppoſed to be out of danger? exclaimed Malvina—and will Edmond, my dear Edmond, live? As to that, madam, I have nothing very pleaſing in that reſpect to tell you, as it appears

appears the fever has taken rather an alarming turn; the doctor thinks it will prove malignant, which occasions Mrs. Burton great uneasiness, as she is fearful that it may be contagious.

A malignant fever! repeated Malvina, with terror—and who is with him?—who has the care of him? He has a very good nurse, madam, I know her very well. You know her? Moody, replied Malvina, considering for a moment. Could I see and speak with her, do you think? Why, I do not know, madam; I fear you could not, as Sir Edmond continues so ill, I should suppose she cannot leave him.

Moody, said Malvina, if they should wish to have another, I will procure one. You, madam, replied Moody, with surprise. Yes; only let me know if Mrs. Burton goes often into the room to see her nephew. She! madam, Oh! dear no;



promiſed.

Malvina haſtily paced her ...t weep, though ſhe ...y.

... who conſidered tears as ...f grief, and who had never ...nder the form of deſpair, had ...dea that Malvina was at that in- agitated and diſtreſſed. She there- ore began with the firſt idea which had welt on her mind in the morning; and milling ſaid, another time, madam, you ill believe me; for this morning as I ppeared rather ſcrupulous of believing hat Ann ſaid, concerning Mrs. Fen- ick; to convince me, ſhe took me into enny's room, which joined her miſ- reſs's, and from the cloſet we could ear all what they ſaid.

Mrs. Fenwick was ſtill in bed; ſhe en- uired of Jenny how Sir Edmond was. He is worſe, madam, replied ſhe; the doctor is in deſpair. At theſe words,

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and you ſay
on in the houſe
m?

, but it is a queſtion whether
mitted to attend now; as Mrs.
is ſo much alarmed at its being
ious. I am glad of that, ſaid Mal-
a; well, dear Moody, return there
mediately, and tell the nurſe that you
know a perſon whoſe care may be de-
pended on, who will relieve her by ſit-
ting up every night, and will with plea-
ſure exempt her from ſo dangerous an
office. Yes, madam, I will; but then I
do not know this perſon. Oh, never
trouble yourſelf concerning that, ſhe
will be ready whenever ſhe is wanted.
Thus, Moody, for your own intereſt, as
well as my repoſe, be punctual in exe-
cuting my directions. Mrs. Moody readily
promiſed.

Malvina hastily paced her
id not weep, though the
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gn of grief, and who had never
under the form of despair, had
an idea that Malvina was at that in-
stant agitated and distressed. She there-
fore began with the first idea which had
dwelt on her mind in the morning; and
smiling, said, another time, madam, you
will believe me; for this morning as I
appeared rather scrupulous of believing
what Ann said, concerning Mrs. Fen-
dyke, to convince me, she took me into
Jenny's room, which joined her mis-
tress's, and from the closet we could
hear all that they said.
Lenwick was ill in bed; she en-
quired of Jenny how Sir Edmond was.
He is sorely, madam, replied she, the
worse for his despair. At these words,

ſince ſhe has been informed that it was malignant, ſhe has declared that ſhe is fearful of going near him. So much the better, replied Malvina; and you ſay that Ann is the only perſon in the houſe who goes into his room?

Yes, madam, but it is a queſtion whether ſhe is permitted to attend now; as Mrs. Burton is ſo much alarmed at its being infectious. I am glad of that, ſaid Malvina: well, dear Moody, return there immediately, and tell the nurſe that you know a perſon whoſe care may be depended on, who will relieve her by ſitting up every night; and will, with pleaſure exempt her from ſo dangerous an office. Yes, madam, I will; but then I do not know this perſon. Oh, never trouble yourſelf concerning that, ſhe will be ready whenever ſhe is wanted. Thus, Moody, for your own intereſt, as well as my repoſe, be punctual in executing my directions. Mrs. Moody readily

promiſed.

promised. Malvina hastily paced the room; she did not weep, though she breathed with difficulty.

Mrs. Moody, who considered tears as the only sign of grief, and who had never known it under the form of despair, had not an idea that Malvina was at that instant agitated and distressed. She therefore began with the first idea which had dwelt on her mind in the morning; and smiling said, another time, madam, you will believe me; for this morning as I appeared rather scrupulous of believing what Ann said, concerning Mrs. Fenwick; to convince me, she took me into Jenny's room, which joined her mistress's, and from the closet we could hear all what they said.

Mrs. Fenwick was still in bed; she enquired of Jenny how Sir Edmond was. He is worse, madam, replied she; the doctor is in despair. At these words,

You hate her then? said Jenny, I am aſtoniſhed that any one can like to do that. How, Jenny, ſhould I not, when Sir Edmond loves her? Was ſhe not the cauſe of his neglecting me? Yes, yes, I do hate her, for the men admire her, and all the world ſpeaks well of her. But madam, replied Jenny, that is becauſe ſhe is ſo good, ſo charitable; ſhe appears to receive ſo much pleaſure in ſerving others, and is ſo willing to oblige every body. I am ſure ſhe has done ſo much good without ever ſtirring out of her room; ſhe ſuccours and aſſiſts the unhappy. She no ſooner arrived in Edinburgh, than ſhe found means to relieve that poor Mrs Moody.

Jenny, ſaid Mrs. Fenwick, dryly, make an end of your praiſes, and let theſe be the laſt I ever hear, if you wiſh to remain with me, Jenny, who was confuſed at the folly ſhe had been guilty of, endeavoured to repair it, by praiſing her miſtreſs

mistress in the most extravagant manner, which had the desired effect; and she resumed her good humour again.

Do you think they will conclude to have none? interrupted Melvina, who had for some time been absorbed in thought, and had not heard what Mrs. Moody had been saying. Oh! Who did you mean, madam? said she to the nurse we were speaking about just now. Oh! dear madam, I had quite forgot it; I beg your pardon; I was so taken up with recounting what Mrs. Fenwick said. I have heard quite sufficient, said Mrs. Fenwick, said Melvina, sealing herself, and supporting her head with her hands; I did not know what you were talking of; I do not know where I am.—Every thing vanishes but the pain which at first touched my heart, and which has gained such an ascendency over me: I am no longer myself; it exhausts my strength: Oh! Heaven, that I should lose it at the mo-

ment when I moſt wiſh to retain it, and if poſſible, gain an increaſe.

But dear madam, you ought to take ſomething to ſtrengthen and ſupport you, ſaid Mrs. Moody, with tender anxiety. Yes, replied Malvina, without changing her poſture, make haſte and bring me ſomething that will do ſo. Mrs. Moody immediately went and returned with ſome jelly, which Malvina endeavoured to take, but could not; ſhe taſted and ſet it down; aroſe and went to the window, opened it and looked towards Mrs. Button's; that is where he is, ſhe exclaimed, where he is at this moment ſuffering; and where I have vowed never to go again.—Yet, where I hope to be to-morrow.

You, madam! aſked Mrs. Moody. What do you intend? Why did you liſten to me? replied Malvina, I do not yet wiſh you to know my determination.

Do

Do not acquaint any one with what you have heard me say. Go, and leave me alone, I really want repoſe. Let me have materials for writing. But, madam, you are ſo weak, will it not add to your fatigue? Moody, replied Malvina, without attending to what ſhe had ſaid, bring me one of your caps and a gown, which you wear in common.

What, madam? replied ſhe, all aſtoniſhment—Yes, I wiſh to try them on preſently, ſaid Malvina. But you are certainly in jeſt, madam? At theſe words, Malvina looked ſteadily at her, and ſmiling with anguiſh, took her hand, and preſſing it with force, ſhe ſaid, Moody, there are ſituations in which it is eaſier to die than to jeſt. Mrs. Moody, alarmed at the ſerious air of Malvina, obeyed her in ſilence, and returned inſtantly with the clothes, paper, and inkſtand. Malvina deſired her to lay them down and retire.

She

She made ſeveral attempts in the courſe of the day to write, but all in vain; ſhe could not trace a line. Towards evening, ſhe dreſſed herſelf in Mrs. Moody's clothes and large cap, which ſhe thought would ſufficiently diſguiſe her; and ſurveying herſelf in the glaſs, certainly, ſhe ſaid, thus arrayed, Edmond will never know his Malvina; and I may ſee and be ſerviceable to him. I ſhall avoid his looks, and ſuppreſs my grief; he will not know the hand which ſerves him.—But how ridiculous this thought, in the ſituation he is in, I need not fear being known; his eyes may reſt on Malvina, without knowing who ſhe is.

While ſhe was ſpeaking, Mrs. Moody tapped at her door; Malvina deſired her to come in; and on obſerving her thus metamorphoſed, ſhe uttered an exclamation of ſurpriſe. I came—I came, ſaid ſhe, but really, madam, looking at her with amaze, I ſcarcely know you. What did you want with me? enquired Malvina. I only came to inform you, madam, that

as

as I was ſtanding at the door, I ſaw Ann at a little diſtance, walking very quick; I called to her, to know where ſhe was going in ſuch haſte; but, madam, you really are ſo completely diſguiſed—You aſked her where ſhe was going? ſaid Malvina, impatiently. Yes, madam, and ſhe informed me ſhe was in ſearch of a nurſe for the night; as the doctor had declared the fever to be of the moſt malignant kind, and as this is the third day, conſequently one of the moſt dangerous, and that it was neceſſary that ſome perſon ſhould ſit up all the night with him that he may have his medicine regularly, and relieve the other nurſe, who is very much fatigued.

Oh! bleſſed Mary, and ſo you, Madam! Well, Moody, you ſee I am ready to take her place, ſaid Malvina, collecting all her ſtrength to conceal her diſguſt.

Oh! madam, do you think I will ſuffer you to expoſe yourſelf thus? ſaid Mrs. Moody, I cannot hide it from you that

Sir

Sir Edmond's illneſs is mortal, and even contagious. Every body flies from him; the nurſe is fearful of being long with him; and they are in doubt whether they can get another.

Do not ſay a word or loſe a moment, replied Malvina, in a tone that commanded obedience; aſſure Ann, that in the courſe of an hour you will bring her a nurſe; and prepare yourſelf to introduce me as ſuch this evening, as a woman you can recommend. Mrs. Moody wiſhed to excuſe herſelf; but Malvina would not give her time; and not being able to command the grief which oppreſſed her, ſhe forced her out of the room: Oh! haſten, pray haſten, and recollect that a moment's delay may render you anſwerable for both his death and mine. Why do you mention danger? what is contagion to one who is in deſpair? Go, only prepare the way, that I may receive his laſt ſigh. Mrs. Moody, ſhocked at

the

the melancholy tone in which ſhe ſpoke, could not reſiſt her commands; and they were ſo punctually executed, that the clock had not ſtruck nine, when they arrived at Mrs. Burton's door.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

NOCTURNAL TETE-A-TETE.

THE ſervant who attended the door, immediately conducted them to Sir Edmond's apartment; and as they went up ſtairs, Malvina ſupported herſelf by holding Mrs. Moody's arm. On entering the room, where the light but faintly gleamed, and perceiving the only perſon ſhe loved in the world, languiſhing on the bed of ſickneſs, ſhe trembled ſo much, that without Mrs. Moody's

ody's affiance, ſhe would have fal-

The nurſe, who perceived her reſs, came up to her, and addreſſing Moody; This woman appears very k, ſaid ſhe; I much doubt if ſhe can port the fatigue of the night. The tleman is very low, and perhaps he not live longer than to-morrow.

s to what you have to do, continued looking at Malvina; you have only e very particular in giving him his licine every quarter of an hour; and en he appears unable to take it him- ; you muſt give him the draught, ich is here, with a ſpoon. Come and d it for me, and I will ſhew you how muſt give it. Malvina approached h a gloomy tranquillity, ſhe felt a d chill, her blood ſeemed frozen, and thought her ſoul would be ready to nd Edmond's. If the ſymptoms uld become more alarming, continued nurſe, putting on her ſpectacles to

arrange

arrange the phials which ſtood on the chimney piece, and you ſhould find yourſelf at a loſs for any thing; you have only to call me as loud as poſſible, for I ſleep pretty ſound, when I do ſleep, for I have not had any theſe three nights: I ſhall be in the cloſet cloſe by.

Malvina, who could not ſpeak, bowed her head, and attempted to take the ſpoon; but the nurſe preventing her, ſaid, Are you then dumb? Ah! Lord, how you tremble; one may ſoon know you have never ſeen a dying perſon. The laſt ſentence—the chamber, the glimmering ſickly light; all reminded Malvina of the laſt moments of her beloved friend, and ſupporting herſelf by the bed-poſt, ſhe ſaid, no one has perhaps been more uſed to ſuch ſcenes than myſelf.

Faith, one would not believe it, ſaid the nurſe; why then are you ſo ſerious?

that

not very common in our ſitua-
for if we were to afflict ourſelves
all thoſe whom we ſee die, we
ſoon come to an end ourſelves.
ome, continued ſhe, approaching
d; open the curtain, hold up the
ts head while I give him ſome

Malvina obeyed, it was only
that ſhe perceived Sir Edmond,
is eyes ſhut, without motion, pale
ſigured; his reſpiration ſhort and
ſed, was all that ſhewed any re-
of life. She ſaw, and felt her
e increaſe with the danger of her

putting her arm under his head,
d it on her boſom, and taking the
in the other hand, ſhe gave the ſick
l its contents.

t is well, very well, ſaid Mrs.
in; I ſee you are not quite ſuch
e as I at firſt thought you; really
d not have done better. Well,
ight, I will leave you, for I have
long while on my feet, and ſleep

ſeems to gain upon me. You will find ſome vinegar in that bottle, which you muſt remember to burn frequently. What! Mrs. Moody, are you there yet? come, make haſte and get away; do you not know that the air is infectious?

Saying this, they both went out, and Malvina was left alone in Sir Edmond's chamber. What a moment! What a ſituation was her's! She again beheld that beloved object; but how did ſhe behold him?—In the gloomy chamber, on the bed of ſickneſs, inanimate, without the power of diſtinguiſhing any perſon, without even knowing Malvina; in ſhort, half expiring. She approached the bed, undrew the curtain, took hold of his hand, which ſhe found of an icy coldneſs. She touched his forehead, which was covered with a cold ſweat. His diſcoloured lips were dry and half open. She fancied ſhe heard him endeavouring to articulate ſome words—

ſhe

ſhe held her breath and liſtened—ſhe was not deceived.

Malvina, ſaid he, in a dying voice—Malvina. At this name, ſhe could no longer ſuppreſs her ſobs; but they were not heard or underſtood. She wrapt her head in the curtain, fearful that her crying, ſhould have informed him ſhe was preſent; and that ſhe might become more uſeful to him, ſhe determined in future never to complain. She would not weep; her heart ſhould ceaſe to flutter. She fixed her eyes on the watch, and counted the minutes with ſuch anxiety, that as one paſſed, ſhe ſhuddered at that which was to follow. She was on her knees by the bed of Sir Edmond, with her head leaning upon that cold hand; then holding it between both her's, ſhe endeavoured to warm it.

At the ſolemn ſilent hour of midnight, ſhe implored the God of mercies to re-

ſtore him whom ſhe loved. How ſincere was her faith, how fervent her prayers. She believed that ſhe ſhould not ſupplicate in vain; for the confidence which our Heavenly Father inſpires, augments with the occaſions we have for his interpoſition. Ah! who has not ſometimes experienced thoſe oppreſſive dreadful moments, when the extreme of miſery gives a powerful voice to religion; when no power on earth can relieve our deſpair: then it is that our only reliance is on Heaven, and its mercy alone enables us to ſuſtain life.

It was ſcarcely day, and Sir Edmond continued in the ſame ſtate as Malvina found him the evening before, when ſhe heard ſome perſon knock at the door, ſhe immediately opened it; it was Ann, who came to inform her that Doctor Maxwell was there: he entered ſoon after, and adjuſting his wig, he ſaid, well Goodwin, how is your patient?

Mrs.

Mrs. Goodwin is ſtill aſleep, ſir, ſaid Malvina; I took her place laſt night. The doctor obſerved her more attentively, and diſcovered her, notwithſtanding her aukward head dreſs (indeed ſhe did not in the leaſt reſemble Mrs. Goodwin) and taking her hand in a very affable manner; well upon my word, ſaid he, here is the moſt delicate white hand imaginable, juſt fit to aſſiſt the ſick without hurting them.

Do you not wiſh to ſee Sir Edmond? ſaid Malvina, retreating from him. Oh, yes, I ſhall look at him; but firſt my pretty child, tell me how long you have practiced this way of life?—God's mercy, Doctor Maxwell is ſo well known in Edinburgh, that there is not a nurſe but has aſked for his recommendation; and among them, you have never applied.

Oh! ſir, replied ſhe, wretched at finding Sir Edmond under the care of

ſo indifferent a perſon; when Sir Edmond is dying, have you leiſure to think of any thing elſe? in the name of humanity attend to him. She then acquainted him with every particular ſo minutely, of all that had paſſed during the night, and was ſo animated during the recital, that the doctor looked at her with ſurpriſe; exclaiming, Faith, if all my patients had ſuch women as you to attend them, I do not think I ſhould loſe one; and I ſhall not deſpair of Sir Edmond, now you are with him.—Well, we will now ſee how he is. He then felt his pulſe, and appeared to reflect with ſome attention. Malvina watched him attentively, and endeavoured to gueſs his thoughts, by the expreſſion of his eyes; ſhe ſuppreſſed her reſpiration, fearful of diſturbing his reflection.

At laſt, after a long ſilence, he replaced the hand, ſaying, his pulſe is ſomething better. But really, ſir, replied Malvina, concealing

concealing her agitation, what do you think?—Do you believe him in danger? The doctor, who had not an idea that there was a neceſſity for concealing his ſentiments, ſaid careleſsly, Ah! I cannot yet anſwer, I cannot ſay how it will be; we ſhall ſee. There is nothing deciſive can be ſaid till the ninth day, which is the criſis; but if he ſurvives that, then I ſhall have foundation for hope.

But child, you appear to be too young and delicate to ſit up thus every night, particularly as this diſorder is contagious. It is really a pity, my conſcience will not permit it, and I beg that you will endeavour to procure another ſituation. Me, ſir, ſaid Malvina; no, no, I am very well here, and will not change it; have you no orders to leave, ſir? Do you not preſcribe any thing?

The fever is on the decline, replied the doctor, examining his pulſe again

his ſenſes will return. I will write for him, and deſire it may be punctually followed. While he was writing, Malvina was diſtreſſed to know how ſhe ſhould act, if Sir Edmond recovered his ſenſes, as ſhe was fearful he would recogniſe her; and the emotion it might occaſion, would perhaps be injurious to him.

Here child, ſaid the doctor, riſing from his chair, read this paper with attention; and obſerve, that every particular is regularly obeyed. I ſhall call again in the evening; but if you will take my advice, you will not expoſe that pretty perſon among the dying, when the living might make a better uſe of it. Satisfied with the compliment he had made; the doctor, rubbing his hands with an air of ſelf-complacency, left the room.

Malvina ſeated herſelf by Sir Edmond, and attentively watched for the firſt move-

ment

t he ſhould make. She had carefully
ed all the curtains to darken the
n, and anxiouſly waited for the mo-
t when his beloved voice ſhould ar-
her ear. In about an hour he opened
yes, and raiſing his hand to his fore-
, he ſaid, in an oppreſſed voice—
my God, how much have I ſuffered,
ungs ſeem to be on fire. Goodwin,
me ſomething to drink, to quench
devouring thirſt which conſumes

alvina immediately gave him a re-
ing draught, but he was ſo extremely
, that ſhe was obliged to ſupport
in her arms, and ſit on the bed to
ort his head on her boſom, while ſhe
it him. Let me remain thus a little,
ne; I feel better with this change of
re. Malvina, happy to obey him,
not move, or utter a word; and
d her tears, fearful they might be-
her.

While ſhe thus ſupported the perſon ſhe loved in her arms, ſhe thought herſelf blameable in not permitting him to know her—perhaps he might expire in her arms, without her daring to ſay Edmond.—I am here, condemn me. Alas! ſhe mentally exclaimed, he has not an idea that it is Malvina whom he no longer loves, who now ſupports him in her arms, and ſympathiſes in his ſufferings; who vows never to ſurvive him; and who only petitions Heaven to lend her ſtrength, till he has no longer occaſion for her.

Theſe melancholy thoughts ſunk deep into her ſoul, and overpowered her ſo much, that it was with the utmoſt difficulty ſhe ſuppreſſed her agoniſing grief.—Yet, even under this conſtraint, there was ſtill a ſomething of Malvina; and Edmond, weak as he was, felt a particular ſenſation which he could not account for. It was late in the morning when Mrs. Goodwin appeared, and Malvina

vina immediately reſigned her charge; for ſhe found that the ſound of her voice, though low and diſguiſed, had been remarked by Sir Edmond; and ſhe was in pain leſt it ſhould betray her.

She trembled at the idea which the effect of his knowing her might produce on him, and the danger ſhe was in of being diſcovered by the whole houſe. She retired to the foot of the bed, that ſhe might hear without being obſerved. Are you not going to ſleep? ſaid Mrs. Goodwin. No, replied Malvina, in a low voice, I have loſt my ſleep for ſome time, but I can take a little reſt in the chair very well.

After ſome time, Mrs. Goodwin, fatigued with ſupporting Sir Edmond, laid him on the pillow. This motion ſeemed to awake him; he aſked, in a faint voice, are you there, Goodwin? Yes, ſir, ſhe replied, going to him. Is it you who

have been with me all this time? No, ſir. Who then gave me this drink? The woman who ſat up with you all night.—I thought it was not your voice; this woman has ſuch a particular voice. I thought there had been but one like it.

Where is ſhe now, Goodwin? I believe ſhe is gone to ſleep, ſir, replied ſhe, ſeeing Malvina with her eyes cloſed. That is well, replied Sir Edmond, let her remain ſo, do not awake her—he ſaid no more.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE NINTH DAY.

SEVERAL days had elapsed in a similar manner.—Malvina sat up every night, and concealed herself during the day; and was therefore not observed by any one. Sir Edmond soon forgot the impression which her voice had made. At last, the ninth day arrived; that fatal, that dreaded day at length appeared.

Malvina,

Malvina, with her face hid behind the curtain, pretended to be aſleep, though anxiouſly attentive to every movement which Sir Edmond made; ſhe perceived that his reſpiration became more quick and difficult. It was not anxiety, it was not fear, that alarmed her; it was that heart-corroding grief which chills all the blood, relaxes every nerve, and is as dreadful, when inanimate, as in its frenſy; becauſe it has then attained that ſilent gloomy period, when all the powers of life ſeem to be annihilated, and the phantom hope flies from us.

While the fever raged, it gave Sir Edmond a momentary degree of ſtrength. When the doctor entered, the patient knew him, and made a ſign for him to come to him; ſaying, doctor, I feel myſelf ſo extremely ill, if you think I am near death, I intreat you will not conceal it from me. Come, come, ſaid the doctor, there is no occaſion to diſturb your-

ſelf

you are very young, and
constitution; we shall save
doctor, that you will not deceive
it is of importance to me, much
than you can imagine. If, replied
the doctor, you have any affairs to settle,
there would be no impropriety or incon-
venience attending it, supposing we could
not pronounce ——. I understand you,
doctor, and thank you. Do not imagine
that I possess so timid and weak a mind,
that I do not know how to submit to my
fate. Many vices and follies have, I
acknowledge, sullied my life; but if they
were blended with some virtues, may I
not rest in peace, and rely on the divine
mercy? He then ceased speaking, and
raised his feeble hands towards Heaven.

After a moment's emphatic silence, he
said, Oh! Malvina, since I am destined
to die at a distance from you, and that
thy

thy preſence could not alleviate my ſufferings, at leaſt my laſt thoughts ſhall be dedicated to you; and if my hand is too weak to write an everlaſting adieu, another ſhall ſupply its place. Goodwin, will you undertake to write for me? and get the materials ready. I do not know how to write, replied ſhe, rather confuſed, and going out to fetch the paper and pens. No matter, ſaid Malvina, ſpeaking low, and in a feigned voice, I will write for you. But, continued ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to the doctor, in the ſame tone, do you not fear it may fatigue him?

Faith, replied he, in the ſituation he is in, we may permit him to act as he pleaſes. Beſides this, Malvina appears to occupy all his thoughts; and I do not know whether unburthening his heart may not in a great meaſure accelerate his recovery. Indeed, I think he is too good to think ſo much of her; for I think ſhe

muſt

muſt be a very wicked woman to act in the manner ſhe has done, to be the cauſe of reducing this young man to ſo deplorable a ſituation.

Ah! doctor, ſaid Malvina, with an exclamation ſhe could no longer ſuppreſs; if it were poſſible to read her heart. Who uttered that exclamation? aſked Sir Edmond, with ſome emotion. It was nothing, replied the doctor; I was only ſpeaking to your nurſe, that you had better forget a creature who had done ſo much miſchief, as that Malvina has.

Take care, doctor, how you inſult that angelic woman. Take care you do not believe any thing you may hear againſt her. It is I alone who have been cruel and unjuſt.—It is myſelf only. But I will not exhauſt my ſtrength in vindicating her, as I fear I ſhould not have any left to dictate what I wiſh to have written. Are you ready, Goodwin?

win? I am here, ſir, replied ſhe; and Malvina, gliding ſoftly to the head of the bed, and concealed by the curtains, wrote what follows, dictated by her lover.—

"*Sir Edmond Burton to Malvina de Sorcy.*

"I am dying, Malvina; but though my love for you is the cauſe of it, do not, I beſeech you, accuſe yourſelf of my death. It is entirely my own fault, and has originated from the violence of my paſſions, which has occaſioned a fever, which is conducting me to the tomb. I think I can aſſure myſelf of your grief on my leaving you.—That is ſufficient to vindicate you, Malvina. This will convince me that you have never ceaſed to love me; and that your tears will fall over my grave.

"Malvina, I acknowledge that I regret life, when I think I ſhould have lived for you.

et leaving a world where
but I feel the deepeſt an-
ig doubted you a moment;
by the moſt unpardonable
xpoſed myſelf to die, fur-
your unworthy and cruel
! Malvina, can you par-
y behaviour? Alas, how
niſhed for it! Had it been
ould have ſent for you to
at I might once more have
hand, fixed my laſt looks
I told you that I ſtill loved
Malvina; and I die in

I ſay, Malvina, that you
me—would you not? You
e reſiſted the dying entrea-
lover.—You would have
nt with me—I ſhould have
I ſhould have heard you—
been comforted."

Who

win? I am here, ſ[illegible]eeps? ſaid Sir Ed-
Malvina, gliding [illegible]ere I think I hear her
bed, and conce[illegible] which touches me ſeems
what follows, [illegible] her's. That murmuring
[illegible] I hear is alſo her's; theſe
"Sir [illegible]ghs and groans appear to pro-
[illegible]om her heart. Oh! Malvina, if
[illegible] thy ſoul that breathes round me,
[illegible]s come to unite with mine, that we
n[illegible] together take our flight; preſs thy-
ſelf on my boſom, and exhale its laſt
ſigh.

At this tender appellation, Malvina threw herſelf into the arms of Sir Edmond; and his delirium immediately returned. He exclaimed, with fury, no! no! leave me, perfidious woman! do you wiſh to ſhed my blood a ſecond time? Why arm the hand of my rival with that bloody dagger? Why order him to plunge it in my boſom? Did you not bid me die?—and you ſhall be obeyed.

Oh!

ts?—they cannot be **increaſed!**

here is ſomething very extraordinary
his, ſaid the doctor. Poh, replied
. Goodwin, in a whiſper; I am cer-
this woman is only one of thoſe
s whom Sir Edmond has deceived.
Mrs. Goodwin, replied the doctor,
he contrary, I think ſhe has the air
very ſenſible perſon; but there are
e women, whoſe nerves are ſo irri-
e, that they weep merely from ſeeing
rs do ſo.

er. ſaid Mrs. Good-

till evening. Malvina's ſufferings, during the courſe of that day, were beyond expreſſion; and in order to gain ſtrength, ſhe was obliged to recollect the dreadful night which was faſt approaching; for which ſhe would require ſupernatural force to ſupport her through it.

At midnight, Edmond ceaſed talking; and the doctor having felt his pulſe, ſaid to Malvina, the criſis draws near; if he does not die in ſix hours, I will anſwer for his life. Watch him very carefully, I ſhall not leave the houſe; if his ſenſes return, accompanied with a gentle perſpiration, and if the oppreſſion diminiſhes, let me be called, for he will be ſaved.

This then is to be the hour which w
decide my fate, ſaid Malvina, as ſoon
ſhe was alone. She traverſed the ch
ber with her heavy eyes fixed on th
ground.—Then, ſuddenly ſtarting with
terror, ſhe would ſay, Yet, a few mo

perhaps, and the cold clay will be
t remains of my Edmond; and he,
was lately blooming in health, and
ted by love, will ſoon be laid
and motionleſs, in the dark, deep,
lent grave.

then approached the bed, with
ountenance of deſpair, fixed her
on the face of her lover, and con-
l thus:—Yet a few moments, and
ps thy form and my happineſs will
uried in eternal night. We have
nly a moment to love each other in,
ıte is going to ſnatch that and your
nce from me. Oh, my God! if I
only received my life to behold
die whom I beſt loved. Ah! why
thou beſtow it? Oh God! I did
lefire it. Edmond, I ſhall never
thy voice again!—that beloved voice,
e ſound yet vibrates to my heart.
mine, never again arreſt you? Ed-
l, my Edmond, you are then going

to

to leave me.—All powerful God, permit him at that moment to anſwer his Malvina.

Dear Edmond, at leaſt hear my laſt adieu; it is thy Malvina who calls thee; who would die with thee: already the icy hand of death has chilled all thy frame. I feel it has alſo reached my heart. Edmond! Oh Edmond! do not go without thy Malvina, wait for her, and ſhe will follow thee.—Perhaps the ſame grave may receive us both; and preſſing the body of her Edmond in her arms, ſhe fell inanimate near him.

Edmond yet lived; poſſeſſing a ſtrong and vigorous conſtitution, he had ſtruggled for ſome inſtants againſt death, and the victory was decided in his favor. The flame of life was rekindled in his boſom, and life's vital current began again to circulate in his veins. Exhauſted by his ſufferings, he half opened his eyes, raiſed

raiſed his head, and by the light of the lamp which ſhone directly on the bed, he perceived a woman extended near him. Aſtoniſhed, he looked at her; her head-dreſs had fallen on one ſide, and her hair floated round her neck. He could not miſtake, they were the features of Malvina. Where am I, he exclaimed; is it really her whom I ſee? At the ſound of his voice, Malvina was re-animated, and looking at him in ſilent extacy, ſhe extended her arms towards Heaven, without the power of uttering a word. Malvina near me—is it a dream that deceives me? Can I believe it? Is it really thee, Malvina?

Oh! my Edmond, replied ſhe, are you given back to life. Malvina, ſaid Sir Edmond, in a languiſhing voice, I ceaſe to ſuffer ſince I behold thee. But tell me, by what miracle do I behold you here? Have we really quitted the earth, and are we united in eternity? On con-

cluding theſe words, his ideas began to wander, and his eyes cloſed; but he breathed more freely, and the moiſt warmth of his hands, comforted Malvina.

She beheld his faded lips regain a degree of colour; the ſhades of death were retreating, a gentle ſleep ſuſpended his ſufferings; and overpowered by gratitude, ſhe fell on her knees, and offered to the Father of Heaven, who had ſaved him, her ſilent eloquent tears of gratitude and joy. She looked around, with the idea that every thing ſhould reſpect the repoſe of Sir Edmond, and the ſolemn ſilence, whoſe gloomy horror was ſo frightful a few hours before, ſhe now thought was not ſufficiently ſtill: The very air made her fear, ſhe ſcarcely breathed; ſhe wiſhed the life of the world was ſuſpended, and that nature would not awake till her lover did.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

JOY AFTER GRIEF.

AURORA had already
in to illumine the horizon, and Sir
ond continued to ſleep. Malvina,
her eyes fixed upon him, was kneel-
it the ſide of the bed, when ſhe heard
heavy ſtep of Doctor Maxwell; ſhe
inſtantly to open the door, as gently
ſible; as he entered, ſhe informed
his patient was then in a tranquil
. He ſleeps, replied the doctor; are

you certain of it? Ah, doctor, do you think I can be deceived? Faith, ſaid he, this will not be the firſt time that it has ſo happened; nevertheleſs I will look at him, for if he is aſleep I can anſwer for him.

Malvina flew as light as a bird, and guided him in ſilence to the bed. The doctor examined his patient with his uſual attention, and then looking at Malvina with an air of ſurpriſe, he ſaid, Sir Edmond is out of danger. At theſe words, leſs miſtreſs of her joy than ſhe had been of her grief, ſhe could not contain herſelf, but ran out of the chamber to relieve the violence of her agitation.

The doctor was aſtoniſhed at this ſudden flight; called Mrs. Goodwin to come to his patient, and then followed Malvina, whom he found in the next room bathed in tears, and apparently overcome with joy. On ſeeing him, ſhe

went

o him, and preſſing both his
een her's.—It is then you
ſaved him, ſhe ſaid; angel
en!—Benevolent man! Who,
; poſſeſſes all my gratitude.
f danger, you ſay? Oh! once
it thoſe words; which recalls
the abyſs of deſpair, to Hea-

y you are a very extraordinary
plied the doctor, wiping away
Undoubtedly I appear ſo to
intreat that you will not men-
any one? Doctor, I conjure
o diſcloſe me to any perſon.
owever, ſaid Malvina, with an
which ſcarcely permitted her
; do you think when he awakes
ow thoſe who are with him?

not a doubt of it, the fever
, conſequently the delirium
e. The moment of convales-

cence approaches, and his chief ſymptom will be weakneſs. But from this weakneſs, doctor, will any violent emotion prove dangerous? Certainly, if the powers are too much exhauſted to ſupport it; therefore I cannot anſwer for the conſequences.—But why all theſe queſtions, what intereſt can excite you to make them? What intereſt, doctor, exclaimed ſhe, with animation; there are no expreſſions which can delineate it.—But once more I entreat that you will not diſcover me? I am a very weak creature, that could not longer conceal my feelings. But I have ſuffered ſo exceſſively; pity me, doctor, the unexpected change from death to life, has weakened all my faculties.

I can gueſs, he replied, that you are not what you appear to be; and that ſome very particular motive muſt have induced you to come here. Sir Edmond is the fartheſt from being indifferent to you;

there is ſome myſtery which you
iſh to diſcloſe. Perhaps ſo, but
:ceive yourſelf, doctor, ſaid ſhe,
with ſatisfaction at his penetra-
:t us return to your patient, I
ceal myſelf in a corner of the
he awakes; I ſhall anxiouſly
he firſt word he utters. Beware
do not ſay I am there, and par-
do not pronounce my name.

replied the doctor, I ſhall find
ılty in complying with this laſt
for you know I have never heard
l then, permit me ſtill to con-
nt, and the ſecret will be very
:pt. Nevertheleſs, I am not a
ious to know it, ſaid the doc-

:, dear ſir, ſaid Malvina; I intreat
not aſk me; you are a good and
man—have compaſſion on my
:rings, and do not increaſe them,

by obliging me to acknowledge who I am. Well, my child, it ſhall be as you pleaſe; you appear ſo good and ſo gentle, that it would pain me to afflict you. My God! I think I hear him, ſaid Malvina, liſtening. I am not deceived—Edmond is awake. Do you go alone, doctor, I am fearful he ſhould ſee me. I will liſten at the door, where ſhe immediately placed herſelf, and heard all Edmond uttered.

Ah! good Heaven, ſaid he, on ſeeing the doctor; what has happened to me? a refreſhing ſlumber has cooled the burning heat which ſeemed to conſume me. What a ſweet ſleep have I enjoyed, and what pleaſing deluſions have attended me —I have ſeen, I have touched Malvina! I think I ſtill hear her voice. Huſh! huſh! ſaid the doctor; I will not allow you to think of her: this tormenting idea may again throw you into the ſame danger from which I have juſt reſcued you. No, doctor, you deceive yourſelf; it is

ſhe

ſhe alone who has ſaved me. This night I ſhould have died, I ſuffered ſo much; a devouring grief ſeemed to conſume all the ties of life, which were on the verge of ſeparating, when her beloved voice appeared to arreſt the ſtroke of death, and ſave me from the tomb. Edmond! Edmond! ſhe repeated—and the accents of Malvina vibrated to my heart. I opened my eyes, and ſhe was there; ſhe preſſed me to her boſom, and I experienced through my whole frame that ſweet fluttering ſenſation, which her approach always creates. I had no ſooner wiſhed to make the effort of embracing her, than ſhe diſappeared like a ſhadow.

Well, ſir, ſaid Mrs. Goodwin; ſuch ſleeps are not very good, for they give you a fever. She ſays very true, replied the doctor, for they are the phantoms of a delirious imagination; your pulſe is already much agitated, and if you continue talking thus, you will have a relapſe.

Sir Edmond had not much occaſion to be deſired to remain quiet, for he was ſo languid, that though the image of Malvina was ſtamped on his heart, ſhe ſoon eſcaped his recollection, and by degrees, the remembrance of that night was obliterated from his memory; as the ſhades of darkneſs vaniſh before the rays of the ſun.

Malvina took the opportunity of Sir Edmond's repoſe, to clandeſtinely enter the chamber, and carefully avoided his looks, by concealing herſelf behind the curtains. As Ann had circulated the report of Sir Edmond's recovery throughout the houſe, Mrs. Fenwick, whoſe heart had never been touched by any perſon, or felt, but for him, experienced ſincere joy; and Mrs. Burton, for the firſt time, expreſſed the moſt lively marks of ſenſibility. When the gloom of evening began to obſcure every object, Sir Edmond being aſleep, Malvina was ſeated

near

near the window, making lint for her lover's wound, when ſome perſon tapped at the door. See who it is, ſaid Mrs. Goodwin, who was half aſleep in her chair? Malvina aroſe—Who is there? ſaid ſhe, in a low voice. Can I ſee Sir Edmond? aſked a voice, which ſhe inſtantly recogniſed to be Mrs. Burton's. No, no, replied Malvina, ſo diſconcerted that ſhe could ſcarcely recollect one idea; he is aſleep. Go out, and ſpeak to the lady, ſaid Mrs. Goodwin. What now? replied ſhe, trembling. To be ſure, when the lady is ſo kind as to come herſelf, you wiſh to make her wait—Go, I ſay. Really, replied Malvina; I ſhall not—I do not know her.

Oh, the fooliſh creature, exclaimed Mrs. Goodwin, ſcolding, you will not; and what is it that prevents you? when you ſee that I muſt diſcompoſe myſelf. On ſaying this, ſhe obſerved that Malvina, inſtead of opening the door, had

retired to the moſt obſcure part of the room. She got up, and ſhaking her head, ſet her cap in order, and went into the next room, to acquaint Mrs. Burton with the ſtate of her nephew.

Malvina followed her, from a very pardonable curioſity; to overhear their converſation. I ſhall come and ſee him to-morrow, ſaid Mrs. Burton; and take particular care to purify the room with vinegar; and alſo I deſire another time, I may not be obliged to wait ſo long. I hope you will excuſe me, madam, ſaid Mrs. Goodwin; it was the fault of the other nurſe, who is ſo timid, that ſhe never has the courage to ſpeak to a lady. But ſhe might have opened the door at leaſt. Why, to tell you the truth, madam, though I have never mentioned it, this woman appears to have fits. Pray then, why was ſuch a fool permitted to attend my nephew?

It was Mrs. Moody, madam, who recommended her; and to ſpeak the truth, I muſt confeſs ſhe is very clever in her ſituation; and I could not have ſhewn more zeal and attention myſelf, than ſhe has. But ſhe is ſo ſerious and diſtant, that it is impoſſible to make her ſmile. That is very whimſical, replied Mrs. Burton; Ann, has informed Taſſe, that the doctor was ſurpriſed at her ſenſibility, which is not a very uſual fault in women of your line.—I ſhould like to ſee her, is ſhe within?

Yes, madam, but Sir Edmond is aſleep, and we have not a light. Well, I ſhall come to-morrow, replied ſhe, going away. Theſe words ſeriouſly alarmed Malvina, ſhe knew one glance was ſufficient for Mrs. Burton to diſcover her; would it not be beſt to avoid ſuch a meeting? Edmond was out of danger, and her attendance was now uſeleſs. She ought to

to depart as ſoon as poſſible. She however paſſed that night with Sir Edmond.

His ſleep was calm, and towards morning, particularly tranquil; ſhe ventured to undraw the curtains, and gently preſſing her lips to his hand, which laid out of bed; adieu, ſaid ſhe, in a whiſper. This day I muſt leave you! A merciful God has ſaved you! You no longer require my cares. Thy Malvina departs without leaving any traces of the moments ſhe has paſſed near thee, but a faint and confuſed idea, which will only be remembered as a tranſient dream. Adieu, my Edmond! perhaps we may never behold each other again on this wretched earth.

With thy returning health, I ſhall recollect the duties I have to fulfill; but when the tumult of paſſion ſhall have ſubſided, and the touch of time ſhall have ſilvered our heads, ſhall I not then be

be permitted to preſs thy hand with mine; though it may then be feeble and withered? Then I may aſk, Edmond, do you remember that night of agony; that dreadful moment, when the tomb ſeemed ready to open and receive us both? Has thy ear forgot that accent, which repulſed me; and then relapſing into a ſtate of forgetfulneſs; by the gloomy light of a lamp, you thought you had ſeen Malvina.—But thy languid eyes were ſoon cloſed, and you believed it was a phantom of the night; a child of your delirium, that had taken her form, and her voice.

No Edmond, it was not her ſhadow.—Who, but Malvina, would have died with you? and thoſe ſounds of deſpair, were they not from her heart? Ah! the day advances, and I muſt fly! I muſt go without beholding one look from Edmond to his Malvina. Thy eyes will dwell on every object in this room, but

I will

I will be no longer there. Adieu, Edmond; my heart is torn at leaving you, but no matter. Thy repoſe requires that I ſhould depart. Once more, applying her lips to the hand of her lover, ſhe ſtarted up to deſire Mrs. Goodwin to take her place; but her moving, awakened Sir Edmond.

Who is there? he faintly enquired. She was motionleſs; ſhe was uncertain whether to ſpeak, or continue ſilent; ſhe waited. Alas! ſaid he, muſt I always be purſued by this lovely phantom? Shadow of Malvina, can I never eſcape you? I fancied I heard thy ſweet ſoft voice murmuring ſome plaintive words. —I fancied I was on the verge of happineſs; but it was only in my ſleep. Oh! ſweet and tranſporting dreams, I implore thee to cloſe my eyes, and give me back Malvina: on concluding theſe words, his voice died away, and he again ſlept.

Malvina ſtood a few minutes motionleſs, a prey to the moſt violent agitations. How much did her heart wiſh to gratify him, by diſcovering herſelf. It was not the fear of Mrs. Burton, which alone prevented her; but the languid ſtate which Sir Edmond was in, which deterred her; he required reſt, not pleaſure. She owed him this ſacrifice, and extending her arms towards him, ſhe faintly articulated a laſt adieu, and ruſhed out of the chamber.

She awakened Mrs. Goodwin, went gently down ſtairs, found the ſtreet-door open, ſtole out without being obſerved by any perſon, and returned immediately to Mrs. Moody's.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

AN ACCUSATION OF MAGIC.

GOD be praiſed, cried the good woman, as ſoon as ſhe perceived her; that you are returned. Ah! madam, I have not had one moments peace ſince you have been at Mrs. Burton's. But good Lord, madam, how you are altered. I am very well for all that, dear Moody; Edmond is ſaved. Ah! my dear madam, replied ſhe, ſhaking her head, how much I feared your having caught

caught the ſame illneſs; and who knows yet but he may have been ſaved by your having taken it from him.

Do not fear any thing, Moody; Edmond is ſaved—How then can I die? But while I take ſome reſt, go to Mrs. Burton's, and find an excuſe for my departure. Say that I was taken ſuddenly ill, that my head was deranged; in ſhort, ſay what you pleaſe. I only wiſh to conceal my name; it is a ſecret which muſt ever remain between us. I know you will rely on my diſcretion, madam, and the manner in which I ſhall endeavour to elude all ſuſpicions.

Has any one conceived any, Moody? As to that, madam, I do not think it poſſible, but ſome muſt have been formed; you could not hide your figure, your language, and particularly the grief by which you were abſorbed. No one could ſuppoſe you to be a common nurſe;

nurſe; and Ann told me—Oh Heaven! ſhe knew me then? No, madam, but ſhe ſaid that you neither ate or ſlept; that you was continually weeping, and that conſequently, ſhe was certain you muſt be fooliſh; and ſhe could not think how ſo reaſonable a perſon as myſelf——

That is ſufficient, Moody, interrupted Malvina; I will hear another time; at preſent I have great occaſion for reſt: on concluding, ſhe tottered, for not being longer under the neceſſity of exerting herſelf, ſhe felt her extreme weakneſs and want of reſt; having undergone eleven painful nights of ſevere watching, and agonizing anxiety.

While ſhe was repoſing her harraſſed mind and body, Mrs. Goodwin had ſearched and enquired all over the houſe for her. No one could give any account of her. Ann then told ſome idle tales of her own coining; that ſhe had ſeen her

her one night through the key hole, making ſuch odd grimaces, twiſting her arms about, and forming circles, which were certainly to invoke the devil. All this was circulated among the other ſervants, who heard it with terror; their imaginations took wing; and they all were convinced that Malvina was a witch; who, by her enchantments had ſo ſpeedily cured Sir Edmond of an illneſs, which Doctor Maxwell had pronounced mortal.

Mrs. Moody happened to enter as they were liſtening to theſe idle tales, and they immediately told her the ſame nonſenſe; not doubting but that ſhe would give implicit belief to all that was reported. Jenny was impatient till ſhe had acquainted her miſtreſs of theſe wonders. Mrs. Fenwick, rather aſtoniſhed at what ſhe heard, queſtioned her more particularly; and to convince her miſtreſs, Jenny

ny added a few novel exaggerations; and the reality was no longer doubted.

Mrs. Melmor, who was as ſuperſtitious as the moſt ignorant domeſtic, augmented her daughter's terror, by ſaying ſhe was miſerable beyond meaſure, at their having lived ſo long in the houſe with a ſorcereſs. Theſe ridiculous fancies were at laſt related to Mrs. Burton. She was not to be duped by ſuch an abſurd account; and ſhe had particular ſuſpicions; ſhe therefore treated it as a mere bagatelle; deſiring, if that woman appeared again, they would immediately conduct her to her preſence.

What ſtrength of mind! what penetration! exclaimed Mrs. Fenwick, as ſhe liſtened to Mrs. Burton, as if ſtruck with admiration: who, but a woman who is ſo ſuperior to the reſt of her ſex, would have ſo quickly diſcovered truth from error; and rejecting thoſe vulgar prejudices,

judices, by her philoſophic and enlightened underſtanding, have gueſſed that ſome extraordinary cauſe muſt have given riſe to this affair.—But there is only one Mrs. Burton in the world.

Malvina was informed of all theſe particulars, from Mrs. Moody. She heard them with indifference, ſhe was ſatisfied with remaining unknown; and hearing that Sir Edmond daily gained health and ſtrength. This, diffuſed a ſoothing tranquillity over her harraſſed mind. Hope, deceitful flattering hope, ſeemed again to hover near her; though unconſcious as yet what to hope for—whether its eagle eye would not reſt on ſome pleaſing diſtant perſpective; or ſoar beyond the dark clouds, which too often obſcured her view, and eclipſed the orb of day; or whether to ſecurely reſt, alone in Heaven.

Thus

Thus the limpid ſtream, which the rain and ſtorms has occaſioned to overflow its banks, yet ſoon ſubſides to its own courſe; becoming calm by degrees, reflecting on its glaſſy boſom each fair flower, that buds, blooms, and pendant decorates its borders; exhibiting a nile in miniature, on the floating mirror of its waters.

Thus, while Edmond was rapidly recovering, and his renewed ſtrength permitted him to reflect, his firſt care was to demand of every perſon in the houſe, if Madame de Sorcy had ſent to enquire concerning his health, while he was ill; or if any perſon had come from Mrs. St. Clare? No one could inform him, they had never ſeen any one; or heard of Madame de Sorcy, or Mrs. St. Clare.

This cold indifference with regard to him, created the moſt painful diſcontent; and all the anger of Sir Edmond was renewed

gainſt Malvina. What, ſaid he, ot leave her, wounded by Mr. nd yet ſhe has not condeſcended ble herſelf, to know whether I die? She, who is ſo good and to all who are afflicted, remains indifferent to my ſorrows.

not this conduct evince the in- of ſome different, or altered ſen- ? Can ſhe have given them to or? But no, did ſhe not conſent ited to me?—Did ſhe not confeſs : loved me? Can I then ever Malvina's ſincerity? Yet, I have ing, and not a word or a line to ne of her regret. But that letter ! dictated to her, what has be- it?—who was ordered to ſend this ſuſpenſe, he rang with vio- I want Mrs. Goodwin, ſaid he to nt—I deſire to ſpeak to her im- y. Sir, do you not know ſhe is

direct to her? Lord bleſs me, ſir, the devil only can tell.

But who ſent her here then? added he, with anger. Mrs. Moody. Oh, very well; then Goodwin, go and beg Mrs. Moody to come, I wiſh to ſpeak to her. Mrs. Moody went inſtantly, proud of being in the confidence of Malvina; it gave her infinite conſequence in her own opinion. Sir Edmond enquired of her concerning that woman; but ſhe returned him only vague and unſatisfactory anſwers, aſſuring him ſhe did not know where the woman lived, whom he wanted, and that ſhe had not any directions where to find her.

Thus, he was obliged to remain in his former irkſome ſtate of ſuſpenſe, which he could not any longer ſupport; and determined though weak, to go and enquire what was become of Malvina, and the reaſon of her ſilence. With this determination,

patiently; of whom do you ſpeak? Burton has forbid my mentioning you, ſir; ſhe very probably ima- that you would not think yourſelf l, if you were acquainted that it was ffect of witchcraft. What is all this l nonſenſe? Ah! ſir, replied the , who was dying to inform him of e knew; if I was but certain that Burton would never know that I old you, I could acquaint you with wonderful things.

m not at all diſpoſed to hear them, lwin; only tell me if you know whe- my letter was ſent? Sir, that wo- took the charge of it. Where is woman to be found? Holy Virgin! ſhe, making the ſign of the croſs (for ted to her own faith, Mrs. Burton ted no Proteſtants to her houſe) e nightly meeting of witches, cer- ; and it is not I who can go and her. Only tell me where I can

It was from thence, that letters were directed for thoſe who inhabited that houſe. That he might be certain Malvina was there, he enquired of the poſt maſter, how long it was ſince he had received any letters, directed for Madame de Sorcy, addreſſed to Mrs. St. Clare? For Madame de Sorcy, repeated the good old man, putting on his ſpectacles, and examining the regiſter which lay before him; yes, here is one which I ſent to St. Clare Hall, yeſterday. It is there then! cried Sir Edmond, flying out of the houſe, without ſpeaking to the old man; whom he left aſtoniſhed at his abrupt departure. She is yet there very calm, and at peace—while I——But I will not yet form any judgment, or condemn her unheard. I ought to have the ſtrongeſt evidence, before I have the temerity to doubt Malvina.

While he was thus mentally converſing, he arrived at the gates of the park; he

ıounted from his horſe, and giving
:e to the ſervant, deſired he would
ıere; and proceeded on foot to
ſe: as he paſſed on, he was inter-
by a railing, through which he
diſcover the gardens. He ſtop-
ıd fancied he ſaw—no, his eyes
deceive him; it was Frances, he
ſted her voice; Malvina was cer-
near. His heart beat violently;
ed himſelf on a large ſtone, and
l, with inexpreſſible anxiety, the
›ment of his deſtiny.

:es, who was running about the
ıdvanced to that ſide where he
ıd amuſed herſelf with gathering
wers which grew on the ſide of a
vulet, which was cloſe to the
Suddenly, he heard ſomebody
; Sir Edmond ſhuddered; it was
ior's voice, he was convinced.
and heard him very diſtinctly
g to Frances, thus:—Why do you

wander ſo far from this ſide, my dear? Have you forgot how you frightened your mother, by being alone near the water?

Oh! my dear mama, where is ſhe now? cried the little creature. Come with me, my love, and it will not be long before you will ſee her, continued he, raiſing his voice, and addreſſing a lady, whoſe white robe diſtinguiſhed her among the trees, and who was moving towards them. Frances, perceiving her, ran to her; who, by her air and form reſembled Malvina. She took the child in her arms, and turning another way with Mr. Prior, they went into the houſe.

This ſight ſo ſhocked Sir Edmond, that he remained motionleſs; a cold chill ran through his veins; he then kindled into rage—he ruſhed from the place, and ran towards the town he had quitted.

He

He could not think or reflect; his heart was oppreſſed, his ideas ſtagnated. A gloomy veil ſeemed to overſhadow all nature; every object appeared changed; and the weakneſs of his frame was unequal to this violent ſhock; he tottered, and fell ſenſeleſs on the pavement, at the entrance of the town.

Several perſons ſurrounded him, and ſome of them carried him to the firſt houſe they came near, where they endeavoured to recover him; and it was ſome time before he re-gained his ſenſes. Silent and gloomy, he made a ſign, which indicated his wiſh of being alone. He ſat motionleſs at the window, without attempting to overcome his weakneſs. Entirely abſorbed by the weight of one reflection, the whole univerſe was a blank to him; and he did not even obſerve that a tempeſt was gathering in the lower regions.

The hours paſſed—night approached, the diſtant thunder rolled, but he did not hear. The jarring elements might have claſhed together; nothing had power to rouſe him from his dejection. He remained fixed in the ſame place, without changing his attitude; his head leaning againſt one of the iron bars which croſſed the window, which he had preſſed his forehead againſt with ſuch force, that it was covered with blood. He was rouſed at length by the ſound of a voice which he deteſted, and he flew towards the door.

The thunder had pealed loud, tremendous, and unheard; but the ſound of Mr. Prior's voice had acted as an electrical ſhock; and, in a moment, rouſed him to himſelf, by producing again his torturing ſenſations. He heard him aſking a lodging for the night, as he was come to fetch letters for Mrs. St. Clare, and Madame de Sorcy. The ſtorm had overtaken him,

with an upper room. Sir Edmond, termined how he ſhould act, and a to the rage of jealouſy, was walk- uriouſly about the room. Mr. , is come for letters for Malvina, e; perhaps he will carry one for ſhe will receive it from the hands of rior. Will ſhe condeſcend to read Does ſhe even know that I exiſt? ps, at this moment, ſhe is only us for Mr. Prior's return. As he d theſe words, he fixed his eyes his piſtols, and ſeizing one of them a ferocious pleaſure, he charged it liately, without knowing for what

never knew that the lightening had ſtruck the houſe, that the roof was on fire, and threatened to conſume the building. They ran to his door, and begged him to ſave himſelf. But inſenſible to all which did not concern his love, he perceived no danger; he thought only of revenge. He would not have ſtirred, if it had not been to ſeek for Mr. Prior.

At this moment, he heard the groans of an unfortunate being, who was on the point of periſhing in the flames. His rage gave place to a more noble ſentiment; he enquired where the ſounds proceeded from? It is certainly, they replied, from the gentleman who is above; the lightening has caught the hay-loft, near which he lays. The ſmoke muſt ſuffocate him, for the ſtairs are on fire, and no one dare venture up them. On which ſide is he? aſked Sir Edmond, haſtily, daſhing his piſtols from him. On this ſide, ſaid the landlord; Ah! if there

is

is any time, endeavour to ſave that good Mr. Prior.

Oh! Mr. Prior, replied Sir Edmond, looking angrily; I know very well that it is Mr. Prior; do you believe that name will prevent me? Is not Mr. Prior alſo a man? and without heſitating, he flew to the ſtairs. At this moment, it was generoſity which excited him, for he had forgot his hatred. Malvina was not even remembered. Every other ſentiment was ſuſpended, and humanity alone triumphed.

He had no ſooner aſcended the ſtairs, than they gave way behind him; but nothing could prevent his intrepid mind from ruſhing forward. He ſaw the danger without loſing his coolneſs. He broke open the door, and almoſt overpowered by torrents of ſmoke, he obſerved Mr. Prior, motionleſs on the floor. He raiſed him on his ſhoulders,

and

and bending under his burden, he endeavoured to find a paſſage, but in vain; every opening was interrupted by the flames; he ruſhed towards a window which looked into the ſtreet, where many perſons were collected; they perceived him, and haſtened for materials to receive them; but in the ſtate Mr. Prior was in, it would be dangerous to throw himſelf out with him; and every thing was on fire around him, the beams breaking in; one moment longer, and it would be too late. He reſted him on the window, and uſing every poſſible precaution in directing the fall, he threw him as gently as poſſible, and courageouſly waited to jump out after him.

Before he could eſcape, the fire burſt out with redoubled violence, and entirely enveloped him. He was obliged to ſtand on the end of a beam which trembled under him, and from which he threw himſelf to the ground. Happily, a long piece of croſs bar iron caught hold of the bottom

bottom of his coat, and broke his fall; he immediately recovered himself, and ran to Mr. Prior, who was just beginning to discover signs of life; being revived by the fresh air.

Sir Edmond's dislike had not lessened by having saved him, and perhaps it was rather increased; for now he had preserved his life, he could never in future wish to kill him. He, however, did not desire that Mr. Prior should ever be acquainted by whose interposition he was saved; that he might avoid his acknowledgments; and for ever bury in oblivion an action, which connected him against his will, to a man he detested.

For this reason, as soon as he had given a draft on his banker for five and twenty pounds, to the unfortunate proprietor of the house, he departed without being known, and arrived the next day at Mrs. Burton's, without having determined

determined to return to her, or having taken any reſt. He entered the ſaloon, quite in diſhabille, where he found a numerous company; among whom, he remarked the beautiful, the inſipid, the cold Lady Mary Summerhill; and the pretty ſeducing Mrs. Fenwick, whoſe coquetry increaſed daily, and added to her charms.

On beholding him, all the ladies uttered an exclamation of joy and ſurpriſe. The noiſe, the company, recalled Sir Edmond a little to himſelf; and in the diſtreſs of his heart, he caſt a look of ſatisfaction on thoſe who were round him, vowing and hoping to render them the victims of that hatred, which the perfidious Malvina had given him to her whole ſex.

With this idea, he indulged the ſallies of his imagination; a forced gaiety animated and gave an energy to his diſcourſe

courſe and manners, which rendered him uncommonly amiable and brilliant. He replied, with vivacity, to all the airs of Mrs. Fenwick; and even appeared to give animation to Lady Mary. Each woman received his homage; all imagined they had the preference; and without ſcarcely looking at Mrs. Fenwick, he told her ſhe was adorable—and ſhe believed him. Lady Mary was applauding herſelf for having brought him to her feet. Thinking ſhe ought to puniſh him for his inconſtancy, ſhe pretended to treat him with a ſeverity, which was foreign to her preſent feelings; but which ſhe thought would make a great impreſſion upon him, though he never perceived it.

Thus, each deceived themſelves, imagining they were neareſt their wiſhes; when at the ſame time they were as diſtant as the antipodes. The following days ſtill confirmed them in their illuſion;

ſion; for Sir Edmond, a prey to ſtifled rage, premeditated his perfidious projects of ſeduction; and he wiſhed to have the power of uniting all their hearts in one, that he might have the barbarous pleaſure of tearing them at his eaſe; and thus revenge himſelf for all the torments which he ſuffered.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

MUTUAL RESOLUTIONS.

WHILE Sir Edmond was refigning himſelf to the moſt violent ſenſations, how very diffeſent was the ſoul of Malvina actuated. She had remained in Edinburgh, not only that ſhe might hear frequently of Sir Edmond, but that ſhe might find a favorable moment, either to ſee or write to him, without endangering his health, by any premature emotion. It was her intention

intention to give him a particular explanation of their laſt meeting, and Lord Sheridan's letter; and enforce her determination of maintaining inviolable the promiſe ſhe had given to her dying friend; and appeal both to his generoſity and honor, if there was not an indiſpenſible neceſſity for their being ſeparated for ever.

Before ſhe had executed this intention, ſhe was informed that Sir Edmond had left Mrs. Burton's. If ſhe was aſtoniſhed at his ſudden departure, ſhe was infinitely more ſo at his quick return. She ſoon heard that he was more gay and frivolous than ever; and reſigned himſelf entirely to all his former diſſipation, even to exceſs.

It was aſſerted, that Mrs. Burton had named the day which was to unite him to Lady Mary Summerhill; while Mrs. Fenwick boaſted continually of having captivated

rated and chained him with new
, which afforded her the moſt
me gratification. All this was cir-
:d by Jenny and Ann, to Mrs.
ly. How deep did this account
: the heart of Malvina; ſhe relin-
ed all her intentions, and totally ab-
d by her grief, neither complained
cuſed any one. Sir Edmond be-
l her guilty, and therefore had
mined to forget her, as he had now
with her entirely.

vindicating herſelf, ſhe perhaps
: recall him; but ſince he had van-
ed his affection, and ſhe had deter-
l to maintain her vow, why endea-
to re-kindle ſentiments, which would
render him unhappy? Alſo, ſhe
ſecret preſentiment, which inform-
:r ſuch an attempt would be uſeleſs.
ond was ſuſceptible of a violent
n, but incapable of a laſting attach-
; he therefore no longer deſerved

her

her confidence. She could believe the energy of his love; but no longer depend on his ſtability.

From the time ſhe was at liberty to fulfil her duties of friendſhip; her reſolution was taken; ſhe would remain ſilent with regard to him; and ſuppreſſing her affection, ſhe would go farther and abſent herſelf; devoting all her days to her little charge, in ſolitude and retirement; and bid adieu to a deceitful world, where ſhe had only experienced diſappointment, ſorrow, and pain. Before ſhe reſigned it entirely, ſhe gave a laſt glance mentally to the being in it, who was ſo dear to her. Oh! thou, ſaid ſhe, whom I love—I never can again (for the firſt exceſs of a ſentiment, which expects to receive as much as it gives, can never be felt twice) be happy, ſince thou canſt be ſo without Malvina.

Alas

Alas, in abſenting myſelf from thee, I relinquiſh for ever the idea of happineſs. But at my age, when the heart is rent by ſo many ſorrows, will it not require all the remainder of my future life, to calm and ſoothe the ſufferings I have experienced? In renouncing Sir Edmond, ſhe determined never more to ſee Mr. Prior. At any other time, ſhe would have bluſhed at thus ſacrificing friendſhip, to an unworthy and falſe ſuſpicion. But in her preſent ſituation, ſhe was not ſenſible that it was a ſecret gratification to herſelf, that Sir Edmond ſhould know that ſhe had left the world on his account; and alſo broken every band which had united her to it. In this diſpoſition, ſhe wrote to Mrs. St. Clare.

"I ſhall ſet out to morrow, and once more re-join you and my dear girl, that I have ſo long neglected. You ſhall read my heart, you ſhall be acquainted with my future determination—your kindneſs will

aſſiſt

aſſiſt me in the execution. By that affectionate intereſt which you have ſo kindly expreſſed, and evinced in all your actions for me, I intreat that you will be alone, abſolutely without any company, when I meet you."

At this moment, when Malvina was alone in her apartment, a prey to that ſilent corroding ſorrow, which embittered her life; and reſting on that inſurmountable barrier, which was to ſeparate her from the world. How differently were they engaged at Mrs. Burton's houſe; noiſy pleaſure and rejoicing reigned there, uncontrouled by any reflection. A ſplendid dinner, to which all the firſt perſons in Edinburgh had been invited, was terminated in a ſuperb evening gala. The gardens were illuminated, the company diſperſed in groups, wandering through ſhrubberies of the ſweeteſt and moſt blooming flowers.

Sir

Sir Edmond, almoſt fatigued by laviſhing ſo profuſely his incenſe on every woman, and perhaps ſucceſsful in making them believe him ſincere in his admiration, was nearly giddy with his conqueſts; and devoting himſelf to gaiety and pleaſure, replied, with rather too much animation, to the ſeductive graces of Mrs. Fenwick; and chance conducted them both to one of the moſt diſtant and retired alcoves. It may be imagined that Sir Edmond would have been perfectly at his eaſe with his Kitty, if he had not at that moment recollected that it was the ſame in which he had been ſurpriſed in his firſt interview with Malvina. This remembrance, by re-calling her beloved image, cauſed him to ſhudder, and he regained his ſcattered ſenſes. His aſſumed gaiety vaniſhed; he leaned mournfully againſt a tree; and Mrs. Fenwick, though near him, felt herſelf alone and deſerted;

Piqued at the ſudden change, which ſhe could not account for, ſhe went to Doctor Maxwell, whom ſhe obſerved at a little diſtance, and ſaid to him ironically, Doctor, be quick, and haſten to your patient, for I think there is much required to complete his cure, while he is ſubject to ſuch ſtarts and whimſies. What does all this mean? ſaid the doctor, joining Sir Edmond; are you really indiſpoſed? Faith, between ourſelves, it is not overwiſe, when every beauty is diſputing for your heart, and ſee only you; is this a time to be ill?—though then, even then, you have the power of attracting them near you, and render them callous to the danger of infection; and I acknowledge all the fine ladies, decorated by all the powers of art, not one of them can boaſt more charms than your pretty nurſe, who expreſſed ſo lively an intereſt in your fate.

But

But doctor, ſaid Sir Edmond, rather aſtoniſhed at what he heard; pray inform me of a few particulars relative to this woman? No, no, I aſſure you I ſhall not.—Mrs. Burton has expreſsly forbid me never to mention the ſubject to you. Mrs. Burton, replied he, with ſurpriſe; and by what authority, does ſhe pretend to controul my curioſity? Mrs. Burton, doctor, is a ſtranger to what regards me, and ought not to prevent you from anſwering me. I beg you will immediately acquaint me who that woman is, of whom I have heard ſuch ſtrange accounts?

What, have you not ſeen her? No—But you have not a doubt who ſhe is, I ſuppoſe? No—I really cannot gueſs. Well then, Sir Edmond, you will ſmile, for I am certain that woman muſt have been one whom you was too much attached to not to have known her, notwithſtanding her diſguiſe; for ſhe poſſeſſes one of thoſe figures which are not

eaſily forgot. Really, doctor, you have rouſed my curioſity; and it will not again ſlumber till it is in ſome meaſure gratified.—You will then at leaſt inform me of her name? Yes, that which ſhe was called, but not her real name.

What, did ſhe conceal it then? I alone poſſeſs her confidence in that reſpect.—Dear doctor, ſhe ſaid, in the ſofteſt tone, and with the moſt enchanting expreſſion, do not betray me, do not mention my name. As to that, ſhe may be perfectly ſatisfied I ſhall keep her ſecret. So then you do know who ſhe is? No; ſhe deſired me not to aſk her; and who would have had the cruelty to hurt her, who was already ſo much afflicted. But what could affect her ſo much? What, can you not find that out neither?—Why, ſhe wept at your ſufferings, and the fear of your dying; Oh! how many tears the poor thing ſhed. Though ſo delicate, ſhe

ld never permit any other to ſit
you at night.

, it is inconceivable, exclaimed
ond, much agitated; and I have
method by which I can aſcertain
: is.—Do you not know what is
of her, doctor? Oh, dear no,
: as you was pronounced out
er, ſhe diſappeared very early
rning, without ſpeaking to any
or requiring any recompence for
ible; and ſhe has never been
f ſince. But certainly ſhe muſt
en ſeen by ſome one in the houſe;
one know her? No, for ſhe
eft your apartment; and no one
ered it, but myſelf and Goodwin.
Ann pretends to have ſeen her
the key hole, making ſtrange
; ſo that ſince, ſhe is convinced
a witch. But I never credit
nſenſe; thoſe eyes ſo gentle, and
r, perhaps ———

I muſt abſolutely endeavour to penetrate this myſtery, interrupted Sir Edmond, ſpeaking to himſelf. A woman ſo diſguiſed, who was ſo diſtreſſed!——it muſt!—it can be no other! But what a recollection ariſes to damp this hope, whoſe diſtant ray gleamed o'er my heart. Did I not hear at Aberthney that ſhe had never left Mrs. St. Clare's? Did I not myſelf obſerve her walking under the trees with that hateful ——— ?

But when you was dictating the letter to that Malvina, of whom you was perpetually talking, continued the doctor, her grief appeared much increaſed, and ſhe ſobbed aloud! I fancy there was ſome little jealouſy lurking!—for ſhe was then moſt affected and wept the moſt, when you addreſſed any tender epithets to that favored lady.

This name always follows me, ſaid Sir Edmond, riſing and returning to the walk

which

which led to the houſe. From all that I hear, and all that I feel, the remembrance of Malvina will ever riſe ſuperior to every other pleaſure; and notwithſtanding all my efforts, ſhe will always maintain her ſtation in my heart. But there is a neceſſity for an immediate elucidation of this enigma, which certainly conceals ſomething very extraordinary. Yet, what intereſt can I have in it? It was not her who was thus concealed; but no matter, I will be certain at leaſt.

As he ended theſe words, he entered the ball-room, and was ſilently croſſing it, in order to go out; when Mrs. Fenwick, who penetrated his deſign, immediately flew after him, with an intention of detaining him. Where are you going? ſaid ſhe, with a kind ſmile; you will ſoon return. Certainly, he replied; without knowing what he ſaid. You will be my partner, will you not? She was going to ſay, that was what ſhe moſt wiſhed; when

ſhe perceived Mrs. Burton coming towards them, to ſpeak to Sir Edmond. She therefore retired.

I hope, ſaid ſhe, with an air of authority, you will not forget that Lady Mary Summerhill expects your hand for the evening. Preſent my compliments to her, he replied, quite abſorbed, I ſhall be with her in a moment. He walked out of the room, ran down ſtairs, and in leſs than five minutes he was at Mrs. Moody's.

CHAP. XIII.

THE SHORTEST AND HAPPIEST.

I WISH to ſpeak with your reſs directly, ſaid Sir Edmond to the ant, who opened the door. I will rm her, ſir, replied ſhe; will you ſe to walk into the parlour? Shall I Mrs. Moody there? no, ſir, ſhe is ſtairs—looking more at him, than ntive to what he ſaid; but I will go let her know. I ſhall be with her

sooner than you, said he, impatiently; and running up stairs, he opened the first door he came to. The room was nearly dark, except the faint glimmering of a lamp, which hung on the staircase, which, as he opened the door, permitted him to distinguish a woman sitting near the window, with her back towards him, and her arm resting on a table, as if lost in the deepest reflection.

Is Mrs. Moody here? said Sir Edmond, in a gentle voice: at the sound, the person uttered an exclamation! and, rising with precipitation, overturned the table; and raising her hands to Heaven, Oh! Great God, I thought it was him. Sir Edmond was struck at the sound of that loved voice, and knew it was Malvina. He fell at her feet, and rising again, pressed her with transport to his bosom, repeating a thousand times, it is her!—it is Malvina! my tender, my beloved Malvina!

vina! she did not withdraw from him; mutual sentiments united them.

Suspicion, reproach, grief, all were obliterated.—Without being mentioned, every thing was understood intuitively; what occasion was there for an explanation?—they loved each other, they were certain of it, and that was sufficient; their tears fell together, love absorbed them; and the universe was annihilated.

I do not pretend to describe the scene, as it is one of those where expression must fail, and which a refined and delicate soul, such as Malvina possessed, could alone feel. It is the great passions which can call forth the energy of eloquence, but when they have arrived to their particular height, expression makes a pause, and silence is most eloquent; and these same scenes give the sublime of happiness. —It may naturally be imagined, that on

Sir Edmond's finding Malvina, he ſoon forgot that he was expected at Mrs. Burton's.

With what rapture and gratitude did he contemplate that beloved woman! whoſe generous tenderneſs could find force ſufficient to return to a houſe, which ſhe had been partly compelled to leave; and who, for his ſake, had braved even death. When the firſt effuſions of their joy was a little calmed, they mutually relieved their oppreſſed hearts; they wept at the recollection of thoſe moments, when Sir Edmond had nearly recogniſed his attentive nurſe: ſhe explained the reaſons of her ſilence, and her lover approved every thing.

At ſuch a moment there was no cauſe for blame; all appeared perfectly right; they felt ſo happy, that not any additional circumſtance could have rendered them more ſo. He quitted her with extreme

treme reluctance for the preſent, but it was only to ſee her again. Without ſaying it, they each felt they could not live ſeparate any longer. They were conſcious that a thouſand obſtacles muſt prevent their union, yet they imagined they might be overcome.

On his return to Mrs. Burton's, he had to ſuſtain her haughty reproaches, the tender complaints of Mrs. Fenwick, and the diſdainful ſilence of Lady Mary Summerhill. He paid not the leaſt attention to any thing; he never anſwered any of them, every thing appeared indifferent to him; he had ceaſed to live for that day—he ſhould not ſee Malvina till the next.

He went therefore every morning to ſee her, and the exquiſite pleaſure of being together, was ſo much increaſed by the pains they had endured, that they thought only of enjoying it. They were ſufficiently happy in beholding, in loving, and

and in expreſſing their affection. In this ſweet intercourſe the time paſſed ſo ſwiftly, that they never remarked with what velocity he winged his rapid flight; and days that appeared but as moments, ſucceeded to thoſe hours, which ſeemed as ages. Though Malvina was ſo much abſorbed by her affection, yet the idea of Louiſa often obtruded itſelf; ſhe could never forget the melancholy ſituation of that unfortunate woman, and more than once, theſe painful recollections deprived her of the pleaſure ſhe enjoyed in Sir Edmond's converſation.

She at length could not longer conceal how much theſe thoughts occupied her attention, and reſolved to ſpeak to him on the ſubject. On hearing her enquiries, he bluſhed, heſitated, and, taking both hands of his friend, and preſſing them to his heart, he ſaid, you ſhall know every thing; from henceforth I will never conceal any thing from you.

But,

But, Malvina, on hearing what I formerly was, do not forget what you have made me at present. Do not forget that Edmond, now esteemed by Malvina, is no longer that giddy, inconstant, perjured, insensible Edmond, which he was formerly. Oh! my Malvina, thanks, ten thousand thanks, as a preface to you, for the vices which you have so completely cured in me. What is it you require? and what is it you fear? Edmond, replied she, sighing! Do you not know what lengths my heart has gone for you?

Alas! whatever may be the vices which you are to acknowledge, though they may undoubtedly afflict me greatly, they cannot obliterate my affection. Recollect also, Malvina, continued he, that it is to thee, whose esteem I prize more than existence, that I have the courage to confess my crimes. But sooner than not avow the truth, I am resolved to run the risque of your contempt, that I may at last be more

more deſerving of you: I perhaps expoſe myſelf to the hazard of loſing you for ever.

Edmond, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling; is there any occaſion for your wiſhing to ſeduce your judge? Confide alone in my tenderneſs, as a ſhield for your defence; it is that which will extenuate your faults, and excuſe your errors. No one will be more ingenuous than myſelf in diving for reaſons, to make you appear leſs guilty; and certainly, no one has more ſincere wiſhes to find you ſo.

Edmond, then certain of his power, ſeated himſelf by Malvina, with his eyes fixed on her face, that he might obſerve and penetrate the ſlighteſt of her feelings, which would be reflected on the mirror of her expreſſive countenance, by the recital which he was going to communicate.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

THE HISTORY OF LOUISA.

IT is now above ſeven years ſince Mrs. Burton made a journey to London. As ſhe was the only one I ever had to obſerve my conduct, I led a diſſipated and giddy life, indulging in every pleaſure to exceſs, though I was ſcarcely nineteen, and my aunt trembled for the conſequences this might produce in future. She conſequently wiſhed me to attend on this journey, and I ſhould have conſented with pleaſure, if Mr. St. Clare, one of my friends, had not prevailed

vailed upon me to remain with him in Edinburgh, as he was to be married in a few days. I therefore bid adieu to Mrs. Burton; and in a little time after, my friend preſented me to his wife.

Mrs. St. Clare was then of the ſame age with myſelf, and in all the bloom of youth and beauty: ſhe pleaſed me, and I determined to make her love me. Do not exclaim againſt me, Malvina; at that time I had no idea of the virtue of woman; I only thought that the beſt of them were thoſe who had the feweſt lovers; and with ſuch ideas, it appeared a matter of little importance I thought for my friend, whether it was myſelf or any other who was in love with his wife. However, Mrs. St. Clare reſiſted all my attempts: I found ſhe poſſeſſed a mind fraught with an enthuſiaſm for virtue, which I conſidered as prejudice, and which I imagined would be very eaſy to overcome. I found ſhe was tenderly attached to her huſband,

and

and ſo far from my making any impreſſion on her heart, I was every day more diſtant from ſucceeding; and as I loved her, it afflicted me extremely.

At that time, I was firmly perſuaded there was not any woman who had not moments of weakneſs, or any virtue which would not yield to perſeverance and opportunity: I therefore had not a doubt, but that if I would take the trouble, I ſhould in the end triumph over Mrs. St. Clare. I had not made the leaſt progreſs in gaining her affection, when a new object created new deſires in my heart. Mrs. St. Clare had ſent for her ſiſter to be with her. I then, for the firſt time, ſaw Louiſa; ſhe was only ſixteen; ſhe was beautiful, innocent, and tender; her large blue eyes expreſſed a voluptuouſneſs which her heart was unconſcious of. I had only to ſpeak, to gain her affections; and ſhe returned my love ſo cordially, that the facility with which

I gained

I gained it, might, perhaps, have cooled my ardor, if Mrs. St. Clare, uneaſy at my attention to her ſiſter, believing that ſhe could not rely upon my principles, had not nearly prevented her from ſpeaking to me. This obſtacle immediately re-animated all my tenderneſs.—I ſpoke, I preſſed, I complained, and Louiſa was very ſoon all my own. But poſſeſſion, in a ſhort time, extinguiſhed that irritation of the ſenſes, which I had falſely miſtaken for love; and I was ſoon powerfully convinced I never had loved Louiſa. I ſaw her but ſeldom; ſhe was conſequently alarmed at it, and imparted her fears to me. Her reproaches fatigued me; I relinquiſhed ſeeing her; ſhe became deſperate and half diſtracted; ſhe made her ſiſter a confidant of all that had happened, deeply repenting her weakneſs, and the conſequences which ſhe ſuſpected would follow.

The

The inſtant of her being acquainted with it, Mrs. St. Clare wrote to me with all the indignation of unſullied honor, in order to make me bluſh for my conduct; pointing out the only way which I could repair it. The abſolute manner in which ſhe expreſſed herſelf, offended me extremely, for I was reſolved not to marry ſo early, and particularly a girl who had yielded to me with ſo little reluctance; yet, I wiſhed to ſave her from diſhonor, and I found means to marry her to another. Mrs. St. Clare's letter reached me at a relation's, where I had gone to paſs a few days.

Lord Weſtbrook, a near relation of my own, was a batchelor of ſixty years of age, very rich, and who had promiſed me all his fortune. He had remained unmarried, from his being of ſo changeable and capricious a character, that he never could meet with a woman who pleaſed

pleaſed him two days together. I formed the idea of his marrying Louiſa.

I began my attack by praiſing her; I attributed to her every quality which I knew was moſt agreeable to Lord Weſtbrook; and I concluded, by giving him ſo animated a picture of the happineſs which ſuch an event would ſpread over his future life, that notwithſtanding his whimſical character, the picture touched him which I had painted; and particularly with a propoſal, which was in his opinion, the greateſt, the moſt convincing proof of diſintereſted friendſhip; in recommending his marrying, and by that means deprive myſelf of his immenſe fortune, which was to have been my inheritance. This, which he ſtiled my noble generoſity, was the only reaſon which determined him. He imagined that I muſt be poſitively certain that he would be happy, ſince I could ſo willingly ſacrifice all his fortune, to contribute to it.

Poſſeſſed

Poſſeſſed with this idea, he became as eager as I could wiſh him, to be introduced to Louiſa. He wiſhed to ſet out immediately for Edinburgh, and we no ſooner arrived there, than I waited on Mrs. St. Clare, to know when he might be introduced. I found her alone: Louiſa had ſet out that day for her father's ſeat; and Mrs. St. Clare was to join her in a ſhort time. I made the moſt of this interview, and acquainted her in the moſt delicate and polite manner, that I never could make Louiſa my wife; and intimated Lord Weſtbrook's propoſals. She rejected them with contempt. She ſaid as I was the perſon who had ruined Louiſa, I was the only one who ought to ſhield her from diſhonor. That the reaſons which I gave could not excuſe me, or extenuate the injury; and the reparation which I had dared to offer, was mean, deſpicable, and beneath a man of honor. She ſaid that ſhe would never conſent to witneſs her ſiſter's being united

to another, when ſhe knew ſhe was ſolely attached to me.

Irritated by her refuſal, which was increaſed by the manner in which it was expreſſed; I replied that I never could love Louiſa again, as ſhe poſſeſſed but little of my eſteem; I therefore never would marry her; and ſhe ought, for the ſake of her ſiſter's honor, to endeavour to preſs her to accept the only reſource which was left. That I would myſelf ſpeak to Louiſa, and I was certain I ſhould gain her conſent to the union.

At theſe words, Mrs. St. Clare regarded me with a look of the utmoſt contempt, ſaying, as I could not prevent the ſhame, nor all my efforts ſave her from your fatal ſeductions, or even incline you to render her the juſtice which honor demands; you may at leaſt be certain that I will ſave her from the diſgrace you intend her. I ſhall endeavour to prevent her from con-

cealing

ceaſing her fault by a falſity. I am going to her, and will uſe my beſt efforts to ſtrengthen her by all the fortitude I am miſtreſs of, and we ſhall ſee whether you can have equal power over her a ſecond time. Finding Mrs. St. Clare ſo reſolute, I diſcontinued my perſuaſions, for, according to the principles which I profeſſed at that time, her's only appeared to me as romantic in the moſt extravagant degree: I therefore made not the leaſt ſcruple of deceiving her, and, to prevent her from having any influence over her ſiſter, I engaged Lord Weſtbrook to ſet out at the ſame time for the ſeat of her father, Mr. Tranſuley.

We travelled all night, and arrived there early the next day. Happily, Louiſa was in her own room when we were introduced to her father, and ſhe had time to recover her ſurpriſe prior to her appearing before us. Though ſhe did not make her appearance till ſeveral hours had elapſed

after our arrival, yet, on entering, ſhe was ſo extremely ſhocked and aſtoniſhed at ſeeing me, that ſhe had not the courage to raiſe her eyes, or utter a ſentence: her timidity, which Lord Weſtbrook miſtook for delicate reſerve; her guilty bluſhes appeared to him the modeſt bloom of innocence; in ſhort, the embarraſſment which was viſible in her countenance, and the coolneſs with which ſhe treated me, delighted him ſo much, that I could ſcarcely prevent him from making propoſals immediately to her father for his charming daughter; but the moſt important point was to be ſettled, which, in order to ſucceed in, it was neceſſary that I ſhould be alone with her. I therefore ſecretly conveyed a note into her hand, wherein I informed her of particulars which were ſo eſſential to the happineſs of us both, that I wiſhed to have a little converſation with her ſome time that night, and that a nod of approbation was to be my anſwer.

At

[redacted]

dnight, I repaired to her room, and
e tendereſt careſſes, I explained
tive which prevented my marrying
d my intention of introducing Lord
ook. At firſt, ſhe loudly exclaim-
nſt me, and ſhed a torrent of tears;
calmed her grief, and ſhe at laſt
to acquieſce with my reaſons, but
from my entreaties, and perhaps
rance which I gave her of ſeeing
y often when ſhe was married.

next day Mr. Tranſuley, on receiv-
r propoſals of Lord Weſtbrook,
l by his rank and fortune, called
ghter, and commanded her to re-
he hand of this gentleman: he
er ready to obey him. She, how-
iſhed to wait the arrival of Mrs.
e; and her father ſo far coincided
s that he would not conclude this
thout informing her of it. But, a
feared the ſteady firmneſs of this
and virtuous woman might deſtroy

all I had done, I preſſed Lord Weſtbrook, who was as much inclined as I could wiſh to haſten the marriage. I informed her father, that, from the well known character of his lordſhip, it would be impolitic in him to give him time to reflect, as, perhaps, by to-morrow, he might relinquiſh the purſuit which he was ſo anxious to accompliſh to-day: that he might very plainly perceive, throughout all this affair, that I was actuated by the moſt ſincere and diſintereſted friendſhip, as by the marriage of Lord Weſtbrook, I ſhould be deprived of all his eſtate: that I knew him ſufficiently to be certain that if he did not marry Miſs Tranſuley, he never would marry at all; and fearing he might change the fancy he had taken to her by one of thoſe fits of caprice, to which he was ſo ſubject, he might renounce her as ſudden as he had been eager in demanding her, if it was not concluded immediately.

Theſe

Theſe conſiderations determined Mr. Tranſuley, and, yielding to my advice, as well as Lord Weſtbrook's, he ſent for his lawyer, and the ſettlements were ſigned that evening, and the next morning, at eight o'clock, his lordſhip received the hand of Louiſa, in the chapel belonging to the manſion.

CHAP. XV.

CONTINUATION.

THE ceremony was but juſt ended, when Mrs. St. Clare arrived. It is impoſſible for me to deſcribe either her aſtoniſhment, or her grief, on finding her ſiſter married. The dreadful look which ſhe directed to me was ſufficient to underſtand what ſhe felt; yet, as there was no re-calling what was paſſed, ſhe was obliged to diſſemble her uneaſineſs, and, during the reſt of the day, aſſumed the appearance of tranquillity.

Toward

ds evening, ſhe withdrew to her
th Louiſa; and deſired that I
llow them. I went: when I en-
found Louiſa pale, dejected, and
void of their uſual luſtre; ſhe ap-
iling under deſpair. Mrs.St.Clare
liſtreſſed, yet her countenance
ated by contending emotions,
er eyes were ſuffuſed with tears.
itly ſeized my hand, and leading
uiſa: Behold! and contemplate
of your perfidy, ſhe exclaimed;
r inhuman eyes on the ſorrows
preſs her. Behold! there, the
onteſt between love and duty;
n unaffected, if you can, at thoſe
ch you have occaſioned. Sir
my ſiſter was innocent, and you
onored her; ſhe was open and
but now your perfidious advice
mned her to the dreadful neces-
ceiving the man who this morn-
ved her vows: yet that is not
to ſatisfy you, but preſuming

on the licentious attachment which your infidious arts has inſpired, you wiſh to embitter all the reſt of her life, by engaging her in all the guilty horrors of an adulterous connection.

The unhappy creature, blinded by her paſſion, ceaſed to behold her crime, or rather you have made her cheriſh it; and ſhe has thrown herſelf, with joy, into an abyſs, when ſhe thought you would be with her. But, ſince I have informed her, that ſo far from your wiſhing to ruin yourſelf on her account, you had confeſſed to me that you did not even love her: when I proved to her that if ſhe had been dear to you, nothing could have prevented you from marrying her: now that ſhe is convinced that it is merely from indifference that you have drawn her into this guilty ſnare, ſhe trembles at the lengths ſhe has gone; and that virtue, which was nearly extinguiſhed, is now re-kindled in her boſom. Ah! you now behold her

ſhuddering

ſhuddering and agoniſed under the weight of her remorſe; ſhe is now endeavouring to riſe ſuperior to her weakneſs, and will for ever abjure her guilty attachment.

Edmond, will you attempt to prevent her? after having ſullied the ſweeteſt days of this unfortunate creature: Will you not conſent to let her enjoy the remainder of her life in peace? Alas! I am but too conſcious that neither my advice, her duty, nor even her virtue, can ſave her from your ſeducing arts; and that if it is your intention, you will yet complete her ruin. Therefore, what I have ſaid, is not to be conſtrued as threats, but as entreaties and prayers, which I fervently addreſs to you. I no longer invoke your juſtice, I only implore your pity. Oh! Edmond, it is not as a paſſionate lover that I ſpeak to you, but as a man of honor, that I demand this as a favour for my ſiſter; for as yet you have never evinced either one or the other, by her.

But, if every ſentiment of humanity is not totally extinct in your heart, you will permit yourſelf to be touched by the deſpair in which you behold her; and by the humiliation which I have ſubmitted to on her account. As Mrs. St. Clare concluded theſe words, ſhe fell at my feet; I haſtily raiſed her, with emotion and reſpect. Though I was rather hurt on hearing her accuſe me of wanting honor, reſpecting my future approaches to Louiſa.

I replied, addreſſing myſelf to Louiſa: You appeared, my amiable friend, to be convinced by the reaſons which I aſſigned, and which prevented my marrying you; alſo of the ſuperior advantages attached to your union with Lord Weſtbrook. I therefore cannot imagine how Mrs. St. Clare can have induced you to change your opinion in this reſpect.—Whatever it may be, yet, if you think me

me guilty, I will not pretend to vindicate myſelf.

Your peace requires that I ſhould never ſee you more.—I will to-morrow leave this place. Do you exact any more from me? ſaid I, to Mrs. St. Clare. Yes, ſhe replied, it is neceſſary that you ſhould promiſe on your honor, carefully to avoid every place where you are likely to meet my ſiſter; and that you will never betray, by a word or look, the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of the fatal connection which has exiſted between you.

I ſhall not ſee her any more, replied I, haughtily; therefore, why do you think it neceſſary to caution me in this manner? I defy any woman, who has had an affection for me, ever to have reaſon to complain of my rectitude and honor, in that reſpect. And is it here that you dare to make that bold aſſertion? ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, raiſing her hands with contempt.

Oh! my ſiſter, cried the tender Louiſa, ſobbing; do not thus deſpiſe my Edmond, and recollect, that if he has not thought me worthy of ſacrificing his liberty for my ſake, at leaſt he has made me one of an immenſe fortune. I know it, replied Mrs. St. Clare; I know, and allow, that in ſome inſtances, Edmond poſſeſſes a great and generous ſoul; for if he had not, how could he have ſeduced you? But they are even more pernicious than his vices, from the dangerous uſe which he makes of them; they almoſt render him hateful. But from henceforth all diſputes of the kind will be uſeleſs. We have nothing more to ſay, Edmond; than, that you will depart as ſoon as poſſible. Go, fly to that brilliant world, whoſe deceitful pleaſures will ſoon obliterate from your mind, the remembrance of our ſorrows—Though I hope it may not always have the power of ſuppreſſing your remorſe. Adieu; and may this moment

be

be the laſt in which I behold you together.

I left them, and the next day, after taking leave of Mr. Tranſuley and Lord Weſtbrook, I ſet out for London, to join Mrs. Burton, where I paſſed ſeveral months in the moſt brilliant circles, and was ſo well received by the moſt amiable women, that I very ſoon forgot that Louiſa exiſted. Towards the end of the autumn, my aunt propoſed my accompanying her to Bath; as it was the ſeaſon when all perſons of rank reſorted to that place. I therefore eagerly accepted her offer; for at that time, my dear Malvina, I was ſo profligate, that any thing which gave the idea of novelty and diſſipation, appeared to me the only real enjoyment of life. I did not then know that diſſipation was to be found every where; but felicity only in one place. My heart was then a ſtranger to love, and ever

ever would have continued ſo, had I not beheld Malvina!

Oh! Edmond, ſaid ſhe, you can eaſily read my heart; and there behold that the affection with which Malvina has inſpired you, abſolves you againſt her will, from ſome of your vices. But continue your recital, and inform me in what manner this intereſting Louiſa proceeded; that ſhe was obliged at laſt to conceal herſelf from every eye.

On my arrival at Bath, continued Sir Edmond; I was informed that Lord Weſtbrook was there, with his young wife. This diſtreſſed me greatly, yet I did not think their being there ought to oblige me to quit Bath. That I might keep my promiſe inviolable, I determined to ſee Louiſa as ſeldom as poſſible; and not at all, if I could with politeneſs avoid it. But I was not permitted to execute my plan as I wiſhed; for Mrs. Burton,

:on, who was ignorant of my con-
ion with Lady Weſtbrook, aſked me
ttend her on a viſit to her; and as I
no plauſible excuſe for my declining
was neceſſitated to accompany her.

s Louiſa had heard of my arrival in
, ſhe therefore expected to ſee me;
he agitation ſhe evinced at my en-
:e, gave an animation and brilliancy
er complexion, and a vivacity and
e to her manners, which I had never
re obſerved, and which rendered her
:mely alluring. She particularly
ded ſpeaking to me, and affected to
me with marked indifference; yet I
d very eaſily ſee that this behaviour
not aſſumed without an effort; that
I retained her affection.

regarded her more attentively; and
never had appeared to poſſeſs ſo
charms. She was grown taller, ſhe
more aſſurance in her air; her coun-
tenance

tenance had more expreſſion, and her complexion appeared more brilliant. Beſides, ſhe was advanced in her pregnancy, which gave her an intereſt which I could not reſiſt. I met her at all the public places, where ſhe excited univerſal attention. I frequently went to ſee her, and ſeveral times found her alone. I ſhall not enter into all the particulars which again gave us an opportunity of being connected. I ſhall only ſay, that Louiſa, more affectionate, more weak than ever; forgot every duty for my ſake, and gave me all thoſe rights, which her union had deprived me of.

You condemn me ſeverely, Malvina; I can eaſily read in your eyes the indignation which my conduct inſpires; but how much more blameable will you think me, when I inform you, that it was neither from any love which I felt for Louiſa, nor from any intereſt which ſhe inſpired; but the mere vanity of daring

eak my promiſe. I certainly could reſiſted the wiſhes, which Louiſa's ns had re-kindled; but as ſhe ſed moſt of the women in Bath; and e men boaſted of her diſcretion, and lained of her indifference; that was ient for me, and the pride of triumph n the eyes of every one, oblite every other conſideration. Our ction laſted ſome time; and the dence Lord Weſtbrook repoſed in removed every obſtacle.

egan to be ſeriouſly diſguſted, when lmirer of Louiſa's, whom ſhe had d with ſome ſeverity, found out her act, and developed our intrigue; immediately acquainted her lord of He pretended to diſbelieve this tale; ver, he wiſhed to aſcertain the fact lf; and as his extreme confidence nade us neglectful of every precau- it was very eaſy for him to ſurpriſe I cannot deſcribe the exceſs of his

fury;

fury; as he had not even ſuſpected it, his misfortune was the more inſupportable, and he was determined to publicly revenge himſelf.

But from his ſingular caprice, and whimſical diſpoſition, which was the moſt conſpicuous feature in his character, his rage turned almoſt entirely on his wife; and ſuppreſſing his fury for the preſent, he came to ſeek me, and told me, that if I would conſent to aſſiſt him in procuring a divorce from Lady Weſtbrook, and ſupport before a court of juſtice, that I was the father of the child, with which ſhe was now pregnant, he would ſtill retain his former friendſhip for me, and that I ſhould become heir to all his fortune.

I rejected his propoſal with contempt, and endeavoured to turn all his anger upon myſelf; by aſſuring him, Lady Weſtbrook had for a long time been deaf

ntreaties; and that I had uſed
oſſible artifice to ſeduce her.—
: would have been yet innocent,
l not made uſe of violence to
over her. That I was incapable
ing what he required of me; for
moment of weakneſs which I had
l her in, was the only one ſhe
eproach herſelf with—That the
rich ſhe was going to bring into
d, was as likely to be his, and
ently muſt be his only heir.

ould not give me time to finiſh,
rrupting me with fury, he ſaid;
wiſhed to deceive him, I ſhould
tter inſtructed my infamous ac-
; for ſhe had not denied her
us adultery to him; and that I
leaſt have deſired her to conceal,
was diſhonored, when you had
dy to engage me to give her my
frightened Louiſa by my me-
nd the weak and guilty creature

has

has confeſſed every thing to me. I know when your criminal attachment and connection commenced with her, and you may reſt aſſured, that I will never acknowledge the infamous fruit of your amours, as my child; and I once more propoſe it to you, to aſſiſt me in my revenge, and I will forgive all you have done. I have no other witneſs of Louiſa's crime; ſerve me therefore; accuſe her, and ——

If any other but yourſelf, I haſtily anſwered, had dared to make me ſuch a propoſal, I would have anſwered him with my ſword; but as I have injured you, and more particularly from the reſpect I feel for your age, I decline to puniſh you, as I otherwiſe would the inſolence of a demand, which inſinuates, that you think me capable of diſhonoring my name for the proſpect of your contemptible fortune. Do not fear that I ſhall repeat this propoſal a third time, replied his lordſhip, with a gloomy calmneſs; I have

now

w done with you. But ſince you re-
ſe to oblige me, by joining in a public
ial; promiſe me at leaſt that you will
ry this infamous affair in oblivion?

I promiſed with an oath: when I in
turn, wiſhed him to treat his wife with
ntleneſs, and generoſity. He preſſed
y hand with a convulſive emotion, ſay-
g in a terrible voice, accompanied with
frightful ſmile, that I need be under no
prehenſion for Louiſa's fate. That he
s convinced, by the ſacrifice I made
r her, how very dear ſhe was to me;
d that in a little time I ſhould have no-
ng to fear on her account. I deſired
m to elucidate his meaning? He re-
ied, he had no other explanation to
ve.

As I obſerved that all my ſolicitude
ſpecting Louiſa, only appeared to irri-
te him, I remained ſilent; he then left
e: the next day I heard that he had

ſet

ſet out in the night, with his wife, for a diſtant eſtate which he poſſeſſed in Northumberland.

This adventure depreſſed me for ſeveral days, ſo much, that I forgot every pleaſure. Mrs. Burton, who had heard a faint rumour of my intrigue with Lady Weſtbrook, fancied I was diſtreſſed at her departure; and, in order to amuſe me, ſhe propoſed our returning to London. I conſented, and I confeſs to my ſhame, that I was not long in that capital before I ſoon loſt every recollection of Louiſa. I renewed my former connections, and engaged in new ones.—I alſo refuſed to accompany my aunt when ſhe wiſhed to return to Edinburgh. I acknowledge I felt a ſecret joy on ſeeing her depart. For though I never ſubmitted very quietly to her commands; yet, ſhe was the only check which could interrupt me in my career; and I was no ſooner relieved from her preſence, than

I reſign

ied myſelf, without reſerve, to all
icentious pleaſures, which wild
governable youth calls happineſs.
ich, when the heart is really touch-
regrets ever having known; and
er remember with contempt.

Malvina, deign to draw a veil
his diſhonorable, ſhameful part
life—That your chaſte looks may
om, and your pure thoughts ne-
ell on ſuch ſcenes. Be aſſured,
ſenſible beings, who conſume life in
ſuit of groſs and voluptuous plea-
eſerve more pity than anger; for by
ig themſelves to the gratification of
ſes, they leave nothing for the
and there remains a void, which
r numerous enjoyments can never
Their licentiouſneſs by degrading
deprives them of the power of
without their wiſhing it.—Men-
mented, by the idea of their de-
ons, and their noble origin; they
would

would wiſh to be leſs than men, that they might be freed from their own conſciences; and plunge without reſtraint or remorſe, into their vicious exceſſes. But in vain, for they cannot extinguiſh that ſpark which will ever live in their boſoms, to their lateſt hour; they feel thoſe ſenſations within, which purſues them continually, condemns, and ever reproaches them.

Oh! Malvina, my beneſactreſs, and my friend; without you, ſuch had been my fate—without you, my heart would ever have remained a ſtranger to love. It would never have known that ſupreme felicity of partaking in the virtuous interchange of mutual ſentiments. It is you who have ſaved me from ruin; and it is you, whom I alone contemplate, as the object of my moſt fervent love, as the moſt perfect of creatures. I ought to adore you, as one to whom I am more indebted than the Divinity himſelf; ſince

He

only gave me life; but you have
n me happineſs: and a deſire to
t it. In ſpeaking thus, Edmond
:d his face upon Malvina's hands,
ing them with his tears.

ıe looked at him in ſilence, with ſuch
ok!—it ſpoke volumes. After a
e, Sir Edmond continued his narra-

I had been invited to a ſuperb en-
inment, given by the Ducheſs of
rborough. This lady ſo much cele-
:d, and ſo handſome, eaſily enflamed
paſſions of a man, who was only de-
ed with novelty. At ſupper, I was
:d next herſelf; I entertained her in
pers—I ſaw that ſhe pretended to be
ted; and deſirous of gaining an at-
nent, which I did not feel; and I
aw the moment when her coquetry
.d crown all my wiſhes.

: that inſtant, I heard ſome perſon
me, name Lady Weſtbrook. At

this name I turned involuntary, and ſhuddered with fear, on hearing them ſay, that ſhe was dead. The particulars they gave of this fatal event, too certainly confirmed it. From that moment, I became inſenſible to the pleaſures which ſurrounded me, and to all the polite and ſparkling attentions of the tender ducheſs. It was not that I loved Louiſa, but the idea of having blighted this fair flower in her early bloom, and having contributed to a premature death; occaſioned me infinite regret and remorſe. London had no longer any diſſipations which could amuſe my mind, and I determined to leave it.

As I had to paſs through Northumberland, in my way to Scotland; the deſire of knowing the particulars of the death of the unfortunate Louiſa, determined me to paſs near the eſtate which ſhe had inhabited, in that county, and where I was informed ſhe had died. I propoſed

to

to ſpend a day there, in caſe of Lord Weſtbrook's abſence; after leaving my chaiſe at Durham, which was the neareſt city to Weſtbrook-hall; and where Louiſa was the object of univerſal regret. I went on foot to the caſtle, the road which led to it was intricate; I had alſo to croſs high and gloomy mountains, and the road paſſed round in a ſerpentine direction, through dry bruſh-wood; a thick fog coming on, rendered the way ſtill more difficult—and I loſt my path. I walked ſome time without ſeeing the veſtige of any human dwelling. All appeared uncultivated and wild. Towards evening, the fog being a little diſperſed, I eſpied a village at ſome diſtance, and I endeavoured to find a road that would lead me to it; when croſſing ſome wild broom, which covered the mountains, I perceived a woman at ſome diſtance, who appeared very well dreſſed; and ſhe was endeavouring with apparent difficulty, to reach a cottage,

which was quite by itſelf, at ſome diſtance.

The form of this perſon agitated me in a very ſingular manner; and I fancied it was Mrs. St. Clare. I was tortured by doubt, and immediately flew after her. I ſoon reached her, and the noiſe of my footſteps cauſed her to turn; I was convinced ſhe alſo knew me. She trembled, and uttered a fearful exclamation. Then ſaid, Ah! my God, what fatal power is it which leads this infernal man to purſue me wherever I go?

Mrs. St. Clare, I replied, with an agitation which ſcarcely allowed me the power of ſpeech; I was going to Weſtbrook hall, a prey to the moſt poignant remorſe; that I might ſhed thoſe tears over the tomb of Louiſa, which her death has cauſed to flow. I have loſt my way; I am but too happy in meeting with you. Ah! ſince I ſee you here, a fluſh of hope has

penetrated my ſoul, that Louiſa ſtill
ts. No, no, no, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare,
a hurried voice, looking round her
terror.

o not conceal any thing from me, re-
d I, in a determined voice; the ſecret
ally intereſts me as yourſelf, and I muſt
w it; I will diſcover it whether you
it or not. I have a preſentiment, that
all find in that low and ſolitary cot-
, the information which you refuſe
ive me; I ſhall therefore haſten there.
p, ſtop, ſaid ſhe; endeavouring to de-
me, and letting my arm drop: ſhe
tinued; well, go cruel man, and
roy all I have done; but do not hope
you ſhall ever return your victim
in, into the tyrannical power of the
you forced her to marry. Your
is to hurry her to the tomb, from
ch I have by little leſs than a miracle,
ed her, from being immured alive.

No, replied I, no; I do not wiſh to ſee her; I am ſatisfied to hear that ſhe yet exiſts. Oh! my dear Mrs. St. Clare, is it you who have ſaved her? It is you to whom I am indebted, for ſaving me from the terrors of ſuch a repentance: bleſſed, a thouſand times bleſſed may you be; my kind guardian angel. Leave me—leave me, ſhe replied; your benedictions only ſhock me. I ſhall tremble all my life now, for having granted you a confidence which has ſaved your barbarous heart from the compunction and remorſe, which I wiſhed it to feel.

Dear Mrs. St. Clare, ſaid I; why ſo much anger and vehemence; are the frailties of love ſuch a heinous crime in the eyes of virtue? No, replied ſhe; my unfortunate ſiſter, on the contrary, is the dear object of my regard, and tendereſt indulgence. But you, who are ever inſenſible; who have never felt love, have behaved with ſo much indifference, as to

obliterate

erate every duty. You, who from
tive of the moſt fordid and infamous
:ſt, of which I believed you incapa-
ll now; have expoſed her frailty to
uſband.

. . . .

hat a deteſtable falſehood, and ſcan-
is ſlander, replied I, with warmth;
has dared to ſtigmatiſe me with ſo
ble an aſperſion? Lord Weſtbrook
lf, replied Mrs. St. Clare; and
gh ſuch a proceeding appeared to me
arly to your character; yet, I am
ertain whether it is not an atrocity
h I ought to have expected from you.
i related all that had paſſed between
rdſhip and myſelf. I acknowledge,
eplied, that the account you have
, appears more credible than that
h I have heard. But whether you
uilty or not of the baſeneſs which is
ted to you, neither my contempt or
:e can be increaſed. Yes, Edmond,
ſh ſay, I hate you; as the deſtroyer

of my Louiſa; you have embittered the remainder of my life. I candidly confeſs, interrupted I, that I deſerve it from you, and I will not even attempt to extenuate or excuſe my conduct; the only favour I intreat of you is to inform me of the particulars of this fatal affair concerning Louiſa, and then I will for ever exile myſelf both from her ſight and your's.

As ſoon as her lord had brought his wretched wife to this place, ſaid Mrs. St. Clare, ſpeaking very faſt, as if wiſhing to abridge the recital as much as poſſible, he confined her in a loneſome tower of the caſtle, where he declared ſhe ſhould remain for life; that ſhe never ſhould behold the child, of which ſhe was going to be the mother; and ſhe ſhould alſo be deprived from ever ſeeing or hearing from any of thoſe friends whom ſhe moſt valued. Theſe dreadful threats drove Louiſa to deſpair, and ſunk her into ſo gloomy a deſpondency, that it deprived her of the

power

power of uſing the means of ſupporting her lot, or letting me hear from her.

I was then ignorant of what had become of her. I wrote to Bath, in vain. I enquired in Edinburgh of all thoſe perſons who were acquainted with Lord Weſtbrook; alſo of his ſervants; but every one was dumb when I mentioned Louiſa. At laſt, by my unremitting endeavours, I gained the information of her being in Northumberland.—I immediately ſet out. —On my arrival, my Lord appeared very much ſurpriſed on ſeeing me, and received me in the moſt cool and diſagreeable manner. As I was determined to diſregard this behaviour, I would not appear to obſerve it, as my anxiety for Louiſa was ſo extreme, and my only wiſh was to ſee her: I therefore would not permit myſelf to be the leaſt frightened at his menacing looks; and my fervent friendſhip at laſt prevailed, and I was introduced to my unfortunate ſiſter.

On entering the dreadful apartment where ſhe was immured, I ſhuddered. Lord Weſtbrook perceived my terror, and looking at me with a gloomy countenance, ſaid—take particular notice of this aſylum; it is where this infamous creature, who has deceived me, ſhall henceforth live and die; and if I have permitted you to enter it, it is only that your care may preſerve and prevent her from dying ſooner than ſhe deſerves to do. I wiſh her life to be prolonged, that ſhe may have time ſufficient to repent of her crimes.. You may continue with her till her confinement, at which time I ſhall leave this place for a ſhort period; and on my return, you muſt then reſolve never to behold her again: and alſo the infamous fruit of her diſhonor ſhall be for ever deprived of her careſſes. It ſhall live to be a ſtigma to its mother, but you ſhall neither of you ever know its future fate.

On concluding theſe menacing and terrific

ſific words, he left us, and I heard him lock the heavy doors of our priſon after him. I threw myſelf into the arms of my ſiſter, and we mingled our tears together; but theſe were tears which could afford us no relief in our painful ſituation. I reflected upon all the moſt probable means I could poſſibly deviſe to ſave her. I was conſcious it would be a uſeleſs attempt to make any application to my father; I knew too well how very tenacious he was, and alſo his ſtrictneſs and immoveable ſeverity with regard to every thing relative to morals and behaviour; and, conſequently, if he had been informed of my ſiſter's imprudence, he would have been more liable to increaſe the anger of Lord Weſtbrook againſt her, than extenuate it. Yet, I was a priſoner, and deprived of communication with any perſon whatever.

At laſt, his Lordſhip left the caſtle. This circumſtance, added to my arrival,

afforded my ſiſter ſo much pleaſure, that it advanced the time of her pregnancy. She was therefore taken very ſuddenly; and, notwithſtanding the dreadful injunctions of her huſband to keep us ſtrictly confined from all intercourſe with any of the houſehold, yet they could not refuſe ſending for a medical man; whom, on his entrance, I obſerved with particular attention. He appeared to be modeſt, ſenſible, and worthy. I therefore opened my heart to him, made him acquainted with Louiſa's ſituation and deſtiny, and conjured him to aſſiſt me, if poſſible, in ſaving her from ſuch a wretched fate. Affected, even to tears, at her misfortunes, he moſt readily promiſed to make uſe of every effort in his power to accompliſh my wiſhes: in conſequence of which, when he went down, he declared that Lady Weſtbrook was in the greateſt danger, and that he did not think ſhe could ſurvive. This account very much alarmed the perſons who were to guard us, and

from

from that hour they began to relax in their vigilance. I was therefore permitted to go and come whenever I pleaſed; and by that means I made all the arrangements, and ſettled every thing which I could wiſh, or was neceſſary to the plan which I had determined upon. I procured a very honeſt and good woman as a nurſe, whom I ſecretly engaged in my intereſt, and who is the owner of that cottage you ſee there.

As ſoon as Louiſa was capable of being removed without danger, our good doctor gave out that ſhe was paſt all recovery, and that it was neceſſary he ſhould paſs the night with me and the nurſe, as he could not think of leaving her in the agonies of death. This was the opportunity fixed upon for ſending her away with her infant. A chaiſe, which the doctor had procured, and was ready at the park gate, carried her to the aſylum which ſhe now inhabits, and a figure, which

which we dreſſed for that purpoſe, replaced Louiſa in her bed. The next morning, my ſiſter's death was reported to every one in the caſtle, and I alſo gave out that I inſiſted upon being permitted myſelf to place her in her coffin; in conſequence of which I did as I pleaſed, without being interrupted. I therefore carefully wrapt the figure in a ſhroud, and had it buried, to avoid all ſuſpicion.

As ſoon as I had fulfilled the laſt duties to the ſuppoſed remains of my ſiſter, I immediately left the caſtle, and haſtened to my dear Louiſa, whoſe weak ſtate of health has never permitted her to leave that cottage, which is rather more than ſix miles from Weſtbrook-hall. She has indeed been ſo very ill theſe three weeks, that I dare not ſuffer her to be removed elſewhere: yet I ſincerely hope ſhe may live, and that I ſhall find her a ſecure, though unknown, retreat, where ſhe may paſs the reſt of her melancholy days in peace,

and enjoy the only comforts which
w left her, which are the company
ſon, and the viſits of her ſiſter.

finiſhing this recital, Mrs. St. Clare
nto tears. Mine alſo fell at the idea
uiſa's wretched fate, and the exiſt-
f her ſon, who was alſo mine! I in-
l Mrs. St. Clare of my intention of
ing for the mother and her infant,
ped ſhe would at leaſt permit me
e that ſatisfaction; and I intreated
take the trouble of receiving
whatever ſum ſhe thought proper
rtion for that purpoſe, and to con-
from Louiſa, for fear it might give
in, or create any diſagreeable ſen-
from knowing who it came from;
was ſo far from accepting ſuch a
ſition, that ſhe immediately re-
it, ſaying, that as ſhe alone had the
ation of ſaving her ſiſter, ſhe only
enjoy the ſweet ſatisfaction of
ting her, and that if ſhe ſhould
ever

ever wiſh to divide that pleaſure with another, that I could not ſurely have ſuch an idea that it would be with the cruel author of all her miſery. I then interrupted her, intreating that ſhe would only ſuffer me to depoſit a particular ſum yearly, which I had deſtined for Louiſa, that it might accumulate for the benefit of her ſon, and a certain reſource for him. This propoſal ſhe at laſt conſented to, and we then entered into a ſacred promiſe, that no conſideration ſhould ever tempt us to reveal this dreadful ſecret which ſhe had confided to me. I then took a melancholy leave of her, and went forward to Edinburgh.

Some months after my return, I heard of the death of Mr. St. Clare, and alſo that his widow, who was much diſtreſſed by the unfortunate ſituation of her huſband's affairs, had, by the aſſiſtance of her father, juſt been enabled to re-purchaſe the eſtate of St. Clare (for which

ſhe

ſhe had a particular partiality) and which ſhe determined to make her perpetual reſidence for life. Fearful that her dependent ſituation might put it out of her power to provide for the ſupport of Louiſa, I wrote to her, conjuring her to give me leave to be uſeful to her ſiſter; but, in a few days after, my letter was returned with contempt, with only two lines, written by Mrs. St. Clare in the envelope, the purport of which was, that all my endeavours had not degraded her ſiſter ſo low, as to conſent to receive any ſupport from the hand of him who was the author of her ruin; that I, of all others, was the laſt perſon ſhe ſhould ever wiſh to accept of any thing from; ſhe therefore intreated me not to force myſelf on her remembrance, and to reſerve all the obligations I wiſhed to confer, for that time when they might be uſeful to my ſon. Since then I have never heard a word from Mrs. St. Clare, as ſhe has always avoided anſwering every letter

letter of enquiry which I wrote concerning Louiſa; I did not even know whether that unfortunate victim ſtill exiſted. I have never ſeen Lord Weſtbrook ſince, who reſides on one of his eſtates, and never viſits Edinburgh.

An interval of ſix years had began to obliterate this mournful event from my remembrance, when your ſudden acquaintance with Mrs. St. Clare awakened all my fears, and opened all my wounds. What more ſhall I add, my Malvina? You are acquainted with all that has paſſed ſince; you know the fatal interview I had with you at Louiſa's, which has been ſome expiation for my crimes. Ah! you cannot ſurely have forgot the violent deſpair which I experienced there; that its effects rent my heart, and conducted me to the gates of death! You have beheld me dying, Malvina, and you have ſaved me! But how ſeverely ſhall I regret that kindneſs which preſerved

me,

, if the recital I have been giving you
ould occaſion you to think me ſo very
ilty, that you judge me no longer wor-
of you? Oh! Malvina, thou idol of
heart! if I am not to poſſeſs your af-
tion, why did you not permit me to
?

Edmond, ſaid ſhe, bathed in tears, your
lt has been almoſt beyond forgiveneſs,
I I am, without a doubt, equally ſo, in
l retaining my affection for you; but
atever you are, why am I thus fatally
ached to you? I can relinquiſh the
a of ſeeing you again, can renounce
and happineſs, but not my affection!
is here, continued ſhe, preſſing her
d to her heart, it is here that it will
ſt for ever, from which death alone can
literate it, whatever may have been
ur crimes, my duties, and my wiſhes.

Sir Edmond was tranſported at this
ctionate anſwer. He preſſed Malvina

to

to his bosom; and while thus in the company of each other, the remembrance of the past, as well as the fear of the future, vanished before the enjoyment of present happiness; and the heart overflowing with tenderness, experiences every sweet sensation which this life can give, in favour of one object, and scarcely leaves a thought to bestow on the rest of the world.

END OF VOL. III.

H. Reynell, Printer, 21, Piccadilly.

M. A L V I N A.

MALVINA,

BY

*MADAME C****,*

AUTHORESS OF CLARE D'ALBE, AND AMELIA MANSFIELD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY MISS GUNNING,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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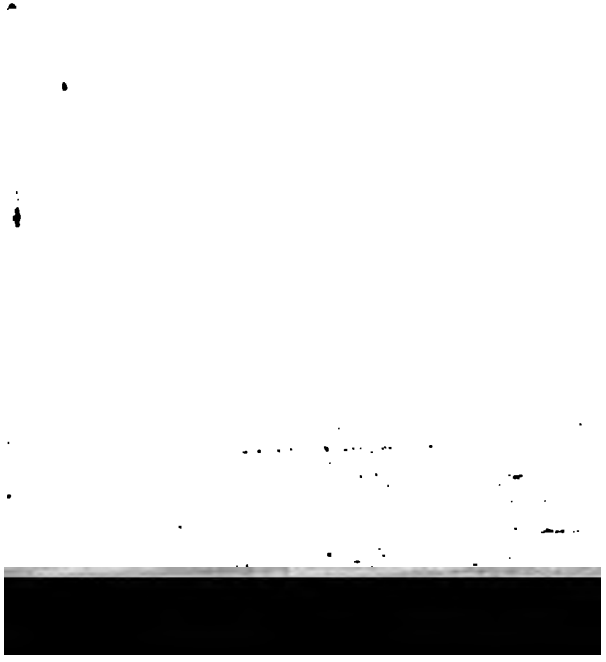

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MALVINA.

CHAP. I.

A LOVE SCENE.

WHILE Mrs. St. Clare was
:he utmost anxiety and astonish-
t not seeing her friend, she wrote
ire the reason which detained her.
:tter awakened Malvina from the
g dream in which she had been
:ed, and informed her that Sir Ed-
was not the only being which ex-
n the world. Malvina was also
ated by Mrs. Moody, that Mrs.

Burton, surprised at the frequent ab
of Sir Edmond, could no longer att
it to the love of dissipation, as she
met with him in any parties of ple
and from that reason she had desire
Fenwick to follow him, and was a
that he passed whole days at Mrs. M
In consequence of this intelligen
had charged Tasse to enquire parti
who resided at that house. Malv
came alarmed and uneasy at Mrs. B
curiosity. She concluded to answ
St. Clare's letter immediately, a
from this time as if her happi
ments were past, and that it was
depart. She impatiently waited t
of Sir Edmond's appearance. As
he came, she acquainted him witl
had heard, and her determination
can my Malvina, my tender frien
Sir Edmond, think of leaving me
we not each of us at liberty, wi
ought to prevent us from determ

appiness with each other? In-
d with the pleasure of loving and
on every day, I forgot there was
city which could exceed that; but
ient is now arrived that must con-
e of it. Malvina must then agree
me, not only by the invaluable
her heart, but also accompanied
and and her faith. Do not blush
ble friend; your delicacy ought not
rmed at the happiness of your lover.

nd, dear Edmond, said Malvina,
it, and I am willing to oblige you;
ou require it, I will follow you to
to the altar. But when my courage
me, I must have recourse to your
ty. It is from that I must intreat
I will not abuse the power you have
; and that you will enable me to
my weakness, and recal me to the
hich you have caused me to forget.

Dear Malvina, replied Sir Edmond, who on earth could ever abuse your angelical sweetness? what is there which it cannot overcome? No, never, however I may suffer for my candor, I will never betray your confidence; and nothing shall be concealed from you. I must therefore inform you, that Mrs. Burton has got an order from Lord Sherridan, which gives her the power of taking his daughter from you as soon as you are married.—Ah, my God! exclaimed Malvina, turning pale, Edmond, what is it you have said? It is then settled; I must renounce you! Renounce me, Malvina, fixing his eyes upon her, and pressing both her hands to his bosom, renounce me! what have you dared to utter? how can thy heart have conceived such an idea?—To be separated Malvina!—Ah! do you not feel that from henceforth we must live and die together? Edmond, replied Malvina, much affected—I do not think I could

support the misery of never again beholding you. But it is of no consequence; if my life should be the sacrifice of our separation, I shall submit, sooner than behold Frances, that sacred pledge which was confided to me by the purest friendship, resigned to the care of Mrs. Burton. Oh! Heaven, the very idea chills my heart: I shonld expect the wrath of Heaven would be the consequence of my perjury. What faith could you place in my vows, when you knew I had violated this sacred engagement? What confidence could you place in a woman, who was so weak as to allow passion to usurp the dominion over duty? What happiness could you expect from a being, whose conscience must continually upbraid her?

Malvina, interrupted Sir Edmond, you are too dear to my heart for me to be

happy, if I cannot render you so. no, do not imagine, that even to you, I would hurt the peace of you lestial mind, or irritate the dead, by ing that child taken from you? most beloved of women, you may, tho my wife, keep the daughter of thy C always with you. I shall enjoy the fectionate attentions you bestow on h and be happy if you will permit me partake in them. Ah, Edmond! what delightful scene do you pourtray; w it possible to realise it, Malvina wo give herself to you with transport.

Well, then, Malvina, attend to me, replied, with animation. If you w agree to meet me the morning after morrow, at the break of day, at the di tance of a mile from Edinburgh, on th sea side, there is an old church which seldom used now; it was formerly b by the kings of Scotland; and no

serves for those who profess our religion. We shall find a catholic priest there, and there it is that I will wait for you; and at the foot of the sacred altar Heaven will receive our vows—but the secret shall be known only by him and ourselves. When we leave the church, I will conduct you to a little country seat, which is in a very retired situation, some miles from Edinburgh; which I have purchased privately from one of my friends. I will leave you there, set out for London, fly to Lord Sherridan, introduce myself to him, and inform him myself of our union. He will be affected at our loves, accede to our wishes, by granting us leave to keep his daughter; I shall receive his promise from himself, and also bring a confirmation of it, from under his hand. I will keep it in my bosom as the seal of your happiness, and return to you on the wings of love. Frances will be with you, and you will

be mine for ever; for even death cannot separate us, as we shall be united and happy in eternity.

Malvina, astonished beyond expression at what he had been saying, remained motionless without the power of uttering a word; she continued for some moments with her head reclining on her hands, as if meditating what reply she should return.

Edmond, fearful that her reflections would not be favourable to his wishes, conjured her, by the most persuasive intreaties, to explain herself. Fearful of meeting a repulse, as he could not divine her thoughts, yet he could scarcely command the impetuous impatience of his nature from flying out; when Malvina, after a long silence, turned towards him with inimitable grace, downcast eyes, and the vermil tinge of delicacy on her

ieeks!—This hand is yours, said she, esenting it to him; but not until your turn from London can I consent to ive it for ever. Go, then, Edmond, , and endeavour to persuade Lord ierridan, which you will very easily, of ie false accounts with which he has been ıused. It will only be necessary to ucidate every circumstance, to render m favourable to our request. Explain ɔur generous intention in favour of his ıughter, and you may be certain that : will resign her to our care. Then dmond will return to his Malvina, and : will find when she is at liberty, that :r heart and hand will both be his.

On finding that she resisted his intreat-ı, Sir Edmond became irritated on being us deceived in his hopes. He permitted ıe violence of his passionate character display itself without controul; and : exclaimed with vehemence, Oh!—no

no—do not imagine that I will thus leave you! do not hope that I will depart till I have acquired every sacred and inviolable right. Malvina, it is necessary that you should become mine, that if you are to be the victim, I may also. Yes, I declare that you shall be mine, in opposition to all the world.

Edmond, replied Malvina with surprise, accompanied with dignity, what do you hope to obtain from this violent behaviour? Do you imagine I will yield that to fear, which I can withhold from love? Speak no more of love, interrupted he, in a tone of ferocity—I see plainly that you have never loved me. You dare to say that I have never loved you, exclaimed Malvina, joining her hands, and raising them to Heaven. No, you have never loved me, or else my despair would have touched you, my intreaties would have affected

The remembrance of friendship
have vainly endeavoured to resist
e; in vain would it have arose from
nb, to assert its power over mine:
r could have overcome the real
of love. But Lady Sherridan,
dead, can preserve a power over
ith which no other can be put in
ition; and your tranquil mind has
felt any thing superior to friend-

et dares to say, replied Malvina,
clancholy tone, that I do not love
No, you do not love me in the
r I do you. Love does not ty-
in your soul. You can make it
sive to reason, to circumstances.
er renders you forgetful of any
Oh! Edmond, dare to tell me
If I permitted it to rise superior
y, could you really then esteem
Why do you mention esteem; is

that sentiment sufficient to engage your attention? Ah! that would never be the object of your regard, if you thought more of love. Have I not then a conscience Edmond, and can we enjoy one pleasure, which its silent reproach will not embitter? Malvina, when love is a flame, which not only warms, but burns, consumes, devours, and evaporates every other effort of the mind, even conscience itself is weakened.

Ah! Edmond, exclaimed Malvina, if you knew how injuriously you judge me, when you appear to doubt my tenderness, you would cease these reproaches. But, then only inform me Malvina, if you do love me, why suffer me to be the prey of such cruel torture? Why will you not accept my vows? Oh thou, dearer to me than life, continued he, pressing her in his arms,—if the sacred engagement, which I so much wish, only

s you, from the fear that it will
e sufficiently secret, give thyself to
nd let us have only Heaven to wit-
our vows and our happiness.

mond—Edmond, replied Malvina,
from him with terror, perhaps I
d be less guilty, as it would then
be the sacrifice of myself. Ah,
should you term it guilt, replied he,
an ardor he could no longer con-
are you not at liberty?—Are you
our own mistress?—Who is it that
to controul your actions? Do you
he public opinion? What is that
ie happiness of your lover?—Oh,
insensible being, exclaimed Mal-
still avoiding him—insensible man,
a thy ungovernable mind, wishes
prive himself of the most valuable
which can give peace to his life—
o his wife of her virtue! Blind,
ghtless man, tell me, would you not

blush to receive my hand upon such terms?

Oh my Malvina, interrupted he, leave, O leave to vulgar minds these weak and subtle distinctions, these pusillanimous fears; we can follow other laws. Are you to grant only to the laws instituted by man, what the excess of my love could not obtain? No, Malvina, the happiness of possessing you ought to proceed only from your own will! Do you not think thus my Malvina, circling his arms round her; but thy silence gives consent; it is understood by thy lover; he wishes for no other reply.

Stop, Edmond, replied she, endeavouring to get from his arms, but all in vain. He held her to his breast, and covered her lips with kisses. Stop, exclaimed Malvina, but he heard her not; his lips had touched her's, and no power on earth

d restrain his transports. The world annihilated—he would not listen to thing. At such a moment, the voice fended virtue alone had power to re- n him. Leave me, cried Malvina, at determined voice which commands awes into obedience, which phrensy can never resist. Edmond was used, and instantaneously obeyed. started from him without his daring tain her. She covered her blushing ks and streaming eyes with her hand- hief.

dmond fell at her feet to obtain her on; but she was deaf to his intreaties, even refused to look at him. Leave she said, depart, I will not see you more until you have recovered your llection.

a such an ungovernable character as Edmond's, pride often suppresses ten-

derness. He felt degraded at being obliged to petition so long without effect; and in a voice which expressed both anger and despair, he assured her, that if he departed without obtaining her forgiveness, he would never return again. This threat roused the insulted dignity of Malvina, and without condescending to speak to him, she made a sign with her hand for him to retire. Surprised at observing a haughtiness which equalled his own, he no longer intreated, but immediately went out, nearly overcome by despair. When he got home, he sunk under the violent turbulence of his outrageous passions, and he was seized with a severe fever. Malvina was informed of it, and it overwhelmed her in a moment; every other consideration vanished. She fancied she again beheld him dying, and accused herself of being the cause of his death; and from that time there was not any sacrifice which she would not make,

or any duty she would not have relinquished, rather than not preserve the sincerity of her affection.

She wrote to him in these words:—"Edmond live for the sake of thy Malvina, for she exists only for thee. Appoint the place, the time, the hour, when you wish to receive her plighted faith; and she will fly to perform an engagement, which unites her to you for ever."

Notwithstanding all the wonders and miracles which have been atchieved by love, this billet would not have had the power to effect the cure of Sir Edmond, if his indisposition had proceeded from any thing more than a transient fever, which had been occasioned by the unruly and tumultuous agitations which he had experienced. The next day Malvina saw him enter her apartment with rapture

and gratitude; and though he was sorry and repented of his behaviour the evening before, and apparently submissive, yet he was always tenacious of his own will, and had previously taken all necessary measures to oblige Malvina to meet him early the next morning at the church, where they were to receive the nuptial benediction. She was petrified and overpowered on finding that the irrevocable moment was at last fixed; a thousand different sensations oppressed her soul; and the recollection of her duty, and the struggle it occasioned between her love, was extreme and severe: however the sentiment of love at last prevailed. She therefore declared that she would not retract her promise, whatever might ensue from it; and that consequently she would meet him the next morning at the appointed church.

The severe mental contest which Mal-

a had experienced, did not escape Edmond's penetration; and he felt r much more delicate it would have n in him, if he had not abused the endancy which forced Malvina, in opition to her wishes, to a proceeding ch she could not undertake, without reproach. But Sir Edmond's affection, ıust be acknowledged, was more art than generous; and notwithstanding his scruples, his impetuous and unernable impatience would not permit to sacrifice his wishes, to the peace happiness of his friend.

ad it been possible, he much wished vina to accompany him to London; ould have been also agreeable to her: he well knew of how much importance as for her marriage to be kept a prod secret, until they had obtained l Sherridan's consent to it.

Ah! Edmond, said Malvina, recollect if he should refuse your solicitations. In such a dreadful alternative, it would be essential that our union should remain concealed under the veil of mystery, fearing Mrs. Burton should usurp her authority, and deprive me of my dear charge. Edmond perceiving these reflections were so painful to Malvina, that she could with difficulty suppress her tears, immediately endeavoured to change the subject, and replied, as he was conscious Mrs. Burton would have all his motions watched, he had deputed his friend, Sir Charles Weymund, to procure a catholic priest, who would ratify their union. That this friend, with Mrs. Moody, would serve as witnesses; and that there would not be any more than those two persons who were made confidents, and also, it was this same Sir Charles who had sold him this little country seat he had mentioned, and bought in Mal-

vina's name: and it was settled between them that she should pass for the sole proprietor of the place: that it would be imagined that she had bought it, that she might live in this retirement with her Frances, far from the world and its society—a plan perfectly according with her well known character. But if Edmond should be so fortunate as to prevail with Lord Sherridan, he would immediately publish his marriage, and carry Malvina in triumph to his estate near Glasgow. But if on the contrary the father of Frances remained inflexible, then Malvina was not to leave her retreat, and her husband was only to visit her (if there should be a necessity for this concealment) by stealth, and he was to enter by a private door, of which even the domestics were to be ignorant.

It was time now they should separate. Sir Edmond could scarcely resolve to leave

Malvina, though so conscious that he was to meet her in a few hours, to be united for ever. He was fearful, that when she was alone, she would resign herself to the most melancholy reflections; and the idea that she did not equally participate in all his felicity, became insupportable to him; and he could not prevent himself from being tormented by his own jealous fancies. It was both certain and natural to suppose that Malvina's joy was not unembittered by fear and remorse; but there was now no alternative: she had not the power of ordering her destiny, and she must now give herself to Sir Edmond. She was perfectly conscious of the dangers by which this union was overshadowed, and it required all her force to prevent his perceiving the slightest trait of disquietude; as she was certain he would immediately infer, that she resigned her hand to him with regret.

CHAP. II.

THE MARRIAGE.

THE beams of light, which
ld the approach of this awful day, at
st appeared, and in partial gleams
uched the distant objects. Not that
alvina awoke to behold them, for her
es had never been closed during the
st night. Too much agitated to find
y rest, she arose without the power of
llecting her ideas: and after having
stily put on a simple robe of white

muslin, with a hat and black veil, she stept into the carriage, accompanied by Mrs. Moody, and was carried to the appointed church. Sir Edmond was waiting at the door; he eagerly advanced to assist her in alighting from the carriage, and as he supported her, he found she trembled. My best beloved, said Sir Edmond, with tender anxiety, collect yourself, this is the moment of our beginning felicity, the moment which will ease all my anxieties. It is your lover, the man whom you have selected, and preferred to all others; to whom you are now going to resign your beloved hand. Calm these useless fears, the altar is ready.

As he finished speaking, he led her into the church; but on stepping on the threshhold of this temple, Malvina's agitation increased. That altar was to receive her vows; the pale and trembling light which was emitted from the flam-

eaux which surrounded it, but faintly lispersed the dark shadows which were isible in different parts of the church. The numerous tomb-stones that she surveyed under her feet, every one of which eminded her of her beloved Clara; the rofound and solemn silence which reigned ninterrupted, except by the deep and ollow sound of their steps, which echo eturning from the void beneath, resounded through the vaulted roof, and then lied away in silence. Every thing conributed to increase in her agitated mind n awful terror, of which she could not iivest herself. However, she slowly adanced, leaning on the arm of Sir Edmond, when Sir Charles Weymund joined hem, and saluting Malvina with the nost profound respect, he informed Sir Edmond that the priest was arrived, and eady to perform the ceremony. Malina continued silent. Sir Edmond was

alarmed at it, and enquired the cause of it. Why is my tender friend thus alarmed, said he, does she fear to behold me too happy? Is not this a moment to dissipate and banish all recollections, and every uncertainty? Dear Malvina, I intreat you, for my sake, rise superior to this weakness. I do not possess any, she replied, with a sweet smile; but what is very natural, the solemnity of the place, and the sacredness of our engagements, filled my heart with an awful and holy sensation; but I do not hesitate.

As they approached the altar, a small door opened into the choir, and the priest appeared dressed in his canonicals, with a prayer book in hand. The light of the flambeaux gleamed directly on his countenance; Malvina, whose eyes were cast down, did not perceive him; but Sir Edmond immediately recognised him, and hud dering—exclaimed, Mr. Prior! As

on as Mr. Prior heard his voice, he in-antly suspected who the lady was that ood before him; and he feelingly anti-pated his misfortune. A death-like ldness seemed to penetrate and freeze is heart:—the book fell from his hand. hocked, he paused for a moment without pproaching.

Malvina, uncommonly surprised, felt, at perhaps this was the critical moment which she should for ever obliterate very suspicion relative to Mr. Prior in e mind of Sir Edmond, and determine is confidence in her. Therefore, sup-ressing her agitation, she went up to im with an air and manner peculiarly ffecting, saying, I cannot suppose that hance alone can have contributed to af-rd us the pleasure of seeing you; I onsider it as an additional goodness of e hand of Providence, which would in-

crease my happiness, by directing that I should receive it from you; and likewise of its justice, that the same hand which had wounded Sir Edmond, will confer a blessing on his union, as an expiation of your fault. Ah! Malvina, what is it you say? Do you believe that my voice shall consecrate this bond? Why should I have a doubt of the contrary? interrupted Malvina—I have never ceased to esteem you! Mr. Prior, exclaimed Sir Edmond, with difficulty suppressing his anger, dare to stir from hence till you have performed the ceremony, for which you were sent for at your peril. Stop Sir Edmond, said Malvina, with an elevation of mind which was conspicuous in her countenance—recollect where you are; this holy temple is supposed to be filled with the peculiar omnipresence of the Deity, and ought only to echo to the words of peace and good will: and every sensation of haughty overbearing pride, which can never sup-

port the slightest resistance, should here be suppressed. Even you, Mr. Prior, if you examine your conscience, will you dare to assert, that it has no secret motive which deters you from performing the ceremony? And if there is one which is unworthy of you, endeavour to purify your heart, that it may be worthy of exalting itself to that Supreme Being, whom you are going to implore on our account. Oh! gracious God, exclaimed Mr. Prior, what have you asserted? Is it possible you can suppose that I have sullied my heart with one criminal wish? And is it not possible to expiate such a fault, if it had existed, but by sanctifying Malvina in the excess of her partiality for another? All powerful God, celestial Father! O turn this misfortune aside; and if it is possible, permit this stroke to pass from me. As for myself, continued Malvina, whatever may be your determi-

nation, I declare here, before the altar of Almighty God, that Sir Edmond Burton is the being which my heart has selected, and whom I implore Heaven to grant as my husband; and that I will avoid both the sight and the friendship of that man who refuses to give his benediction on our nuptials.

The words and lively enthusiasm which animated Malvina's features, overcame Mr. Prior; he could no longer resist her. I obey your voice, he replied, whatever it dictates; and I perceive that Heaven or my conscience has no power to resist this determination. I do obey; but remember, Malvina, that whatever may be the faults which the past may reproach me with, or all I may experience in future, the sensations of this moment ought to obliterate them all. Malvina de Sorcy, and Edmond Burton, unite your hands, and approach the altar. He then began

read in an elevated voice, which be-
ıe commanding, and thundered as he
ed Sir Edmond these words: Will you
ar to love and protect this woman for
r? But on addressing the same ques-
ı to Malvina, he modulated and soft-
d his voice; the words came from his
apparently with reluctance, as un-
ing to articulate a sentence, the an-
r to which would agonise his heart.
length the vows were pronounced,
l the awful ceremony concluded. He
ılored the blessings of Heaven (without
ich all must fall) on the new married
r. Be happy, said he, as the tears in-
untarily streamed down his cheeks,
happy in each other!—and may the
d of infinite goodness and mercy watch
ır your felicity, and render you every
r more dear to each other. You are
v united for ever. Depart in peace.
then came from the altar.

Excellent and worthy man, said Sir Edmond, pressing his hand with friendship, forgive my suspicions and my behaviour. Become my friend, as you have ever been to her who is now my wife, my Malvina. Let her see you frequently, I shall never forbid it; her friendship will repay you for the blessing I have this day received from you.

Mr. Prior, said Malvina, with that interesting grace which embellished all her actions, remember how often you have offered up prayers to Heaven for my happiness, you at last behold me so; and it is to you, my dear, my estimable friend, that I owe it.

Ah! returned Mr. Prior, pressing both their hands in his, and bathing them with his tears, perhaps I may one day be called to enjoy the sight of your happiness,

and mutual love; but it must not be yet. My fortitude is exhausted, for the moment in which I united Malvina to another, revealed to me my own situation: and I abhor myself. But in the deepest humility of a repentant heart, I ought to relinquish the object of my love, for the sins of my soul. Perhaps I shall not survive it long; but of what consequence is a long life, or all the blessings on this earth, which can be enjoyed by man, compared with an immortal crown? as this life is only introductory to that eternity, which may soon conclude this toiling scene of sorrow. Eternity rolls towards us like the waves of a mighty ocean, ready to overwhelm all that appertains to humanity; and only leaves us the remembrance of our virtue, and the deep repentance of our faults.

No, said Malvina, much affected, no,

may you live long, as a consolation to the unhappy and unfortunate, and an example to your fellow creatures; and add to the happiness of your friends.

Oh! Malvina, said he, you have caused me to blush, by recalling me to a consciousness of my guilty wanderings. Leave me then to submit to my fate; and if Heaven in its kindness should think proper to take me to itself, will you not join me in blessing its mercy? But you, Sir Edmond, have obtained the first, the only felicity, which this world has power to bestow; and which is so extraordinary, so rare to be met with—the possession of a virtuous and sensible woman. Show yourself worthy of the blessing you have obtained, by for ever abjuring your errors; and let all your endeavours be centred in contributing to the happiness of that angelic creature; may tranquillity ever

appear in your countenance, as virtue for ever lives in her heart; love her as she deserves to be loved, that the sound of her grief may never reach the deep and sequestered retreat where I am going to bury myself; nor ever let me hear, that the agonies which I experienced in uniting you, were the fatal presentiment of the unhappiness which was to befal her. Then, without waiting to hear an answer, he abruptly left them, and disappeared in an instant.

The last words which he had uttered, struck mournfully to Malvina's heart; but Sir Edmond was so transported with his joy, that he scarcely heard them. He could feel nothing but his own happiness; he saw only his wife; and the delight that name gave, was harmony to his senses.—My Malvina, my wife! re-

peated he, pressing her in his arms, and thanking her for her kindness; he blessed her a thousand times for her love, and could scarcely restrain the violence of his agitation. Malvina less ardent, but more tender and affectionate, did not love him more, but loved him better: she shed tears of gentleness, as she surveyed Sir Edmond; and mentally implored Heaven to take her from this world, the moment when a being, so dear and beloved, should cease to find all his happiness and satisfaction in her society.

The day now rolled on, and Malvina, begging Mrs. Moody's acceptance of a handsome and valuable present, and returning her also a thousand tender acknowledgments for her kind attentions, she bid her adieu, with many injunctions to keep this secret.—She then returned to the carriage with her husband and

Sir Charles Weymund; and they set off for the country seat which had been purchased for her.

CHAP. III.

CONJUGAL HAPPINESS.

THE house was small, elegant and commodious. It was tuated in the centre of an extensive rest, which rendered it difficult of cess; and surrounded with very l enclosures, bordered with excel hedges and wide ditches.

Sir Charles, after having welcomed new married pair to their little mans

took of their frugal repast; and pro-
ed to protect Lady Burton, during
Edmond's absence. He then wished
m all imaginable felicity, till he saw
m again, and left them. Sir Ed-
nd's intention was only to have re-
ined two days with Malvina; and eight
l already elapsed, without his think-
of leaving his lovely wife; when he
eived a letter from Sir Charles, which
rmed him, that Mrs. Burton was
y uneasy at his absence, and had sent
ry where to search for him. That
: evening Mrs. Moody had shewn him
etter, which she had received from
a. St. Clare; in which she expressed
much uneasiness, and also was so
rmed at the silence of her friend, that
: was determined to set out for Edin-
rgh, in order to inform herself what
s become of her, unless she heard very
ortly from her.

They both felt the moment of separation was arrived: without speaking they understood it; as if by mutual agreement their lips opened to utter the same fatal words. To-morrow, to-morrow, mournfully repeated Malvina. Yes, to-morrow, repeated Sir Edmond, with vivacity; but I shall soon return; a few days, and I shall hasten to you as happy as ever; neither wishing nor imploring any other blessing from Heaven, than that I may never more leave the wife of my idolatry, who occupies every recess of my heart.—Affected by these tender expressions, Malvina gave him her hand: he pressed her to his bosom; and while they appeared to be united by love and tenderness for each other, it might be said, that all nature seemed embellished for them alone.

Concealed in the leafy dwelling of the grove, the nightingale warbled her plain-

tive touching cadences; which seemed to proceed from the heart that could die, as it uttered these expressive notes of mournful melody. A running stream of the purest water, joined its indistinct murmurings to the lonely bird of evening, and spread its silver meanderings over the emerald coloured carpet of nature.

The glorious orb of day, as it slowly sunk beneath the west, overflowed that part of the horizon with a mantle of crimson, tinging the pure azure of the heavens with soft clouds of purple and gold, heightened by the vermil glow, which gives the rich warm colouring to an evening landscape.—While the first shades of night slowly descended on earth, as if reluctant to drop its veil, before the last rays of the setting sun had disappeared; and seemed in unison with his pair, that day left nature with regret.

As they returned, after a delightful walk, towards the house, Malvina mournfully supported herself on the arm of Sir Edmond; and, as they were proceeding, she could not help shuddering, as she perceived some withered branches quivering in the air, and then suddenly falling to the ground near them.--A similarity between them and herself instantly pressed upon her heart, and made her tremble for her happiness; recollecting the dreadful and invariable law which governs all nature, has placed the moment of declension next the greatest and most elevated point of happiness. This idea filled heart with inexpressible terror, as a presentiment that her happiness was at an end.—Indeed there is much similarity between the moral and physical world. We behold stern Winter walking with his leaden sceptre over our fields, more than half the year; and his young successor, smiling Spring, reigns but a moment over her tender subjects,

cauteous flowers. Too similar to
nstant anxieties, cares, and pain,
nearly occupies all the term of
nd if it permits one moment of
illity or pleasure, to enlighten our
ct, it only serves to render the
, which is to succeed, more dark
earful, from the contrast. But we
ever remember, that if Heaven has
d to mortals hereafter, an eternal
and unchanging felicity, we must
ly desire to attain, but endeavour
erve it.

was in vain, during the course of
ening, that Malvina attempted to
me the melancholy impression
she had received—not all the ef-
nd caresses of Sir Edmond could
d. Though he was with her, he
ready departed in her mind; and
hstanding the fair prospect of the
, which he pictured to her in such

brilliant colours, yet she could not gain from hope, the sweet promise of his return.

Oh, Edmond! she exclaimed, I am destined never to behold you again; and if these are the only moments which I am permitted to pass with you, at least hear my best wishes.—Remember that this heart, which beats for thee alone, will never cease to remember thee but with life; and if, in the future state, which Heaven has destined us to inherit, we should preserve the remembrance of what was most dear to us, eternity to me will be only the continuance of my affection. Oh, Edmond, perhaps when united there, never more to leave each other, we shall at last enjoy that supreme felicity which can exist only there.

Why does my Malvina doubt that we will find it on earth? We who are so per-

tly sensible of the blessing, may we hope to enjoy it on earth for a gth of time?—But the uncertainty, mond, do you not feel that it is ming? It is not sufficient for me y to hope for your tenderness, but to certain of it, or die.—My tender nd, this absence will be but of short ation: I shall fly to you—love has gs, you know.—Yes, Edmond, it replied Malvina, with a look of most inexpressible tenderness and lancholy. Can you ever forget that as? Unjust Malvina! Dear Edmond, don me, but you can never know at you are to Malvina. Love which, h you, is only a transient passion, is come the intuitive sentiment of my l, and will terminate only with my stence. Edmond, you will be the iter of my fate, and you must answer my life. If any other should become r to you, if it is but for a day or an

instant, your error would never change my tenderness; I should not even require your repentance, before I should have pardoned you. Yet neither your return, or your caresses, or all the endeavours I could make, could ever obliterate the shock I should receive; and the stroke of death would enter my heart, at the very moment your's was unfaithful.

Dearest Malvina, why do you oppress your mind by these melancholy presages of our separation. Let me press thee to my heart, which will answer for me. O! let one of thy soft smiles evaporate the gloomy shadows which envelope thy mind; and one of thy tender kisses raise me from the earth; then pressing her in his arms, he endeavoured to enliven her by the joy he felt in being with her, and in their present happiness to forget the future.

f it is already perceived, that Sir Edd's regret was less lively than usual; l that Malvina's love appeared rather gmented, it is, alas, but the melanly confirmation of the inconstancy of n.

At length the day appeared—the carge was ready—the fatal moment ared. Edmond tore himself from his e: she wept, but was silent. Edmd looked at her, and fell at her feet ain. They mingled their tears toger: but Edmond, finding his fortitude l him, roused himself, and, with a d of cruel courage, forced himself m her. Malvina was overcome, she hed after him: Edmond, she eximed, only one word more, only once re, adieu—it will be the last. Her adss was in vain; the carriage was gone, d he heard her not. She perceived the ces of the wheels fresh on the gravel,

marked the carriage as it passed [illegible] the trees, and observed the hand of Edmond waving an adieu. Struck with the alarming presentiment, that she should never behold him again, she uttered a last adieu, and fell senseless on the grass.

On recovering, she recollected the anxiety which Mrs. St. Clare must be under, on her account; and that it was above two months since she had been separated from her dear Frances. Condemning her neglect, and conscious that the sight of her would sooth her grief, and mitigate the absence of Sir Edmond, she ordered every thing to be made ready for her departure; intending to bring Mrs. St. Clare and Fanny back with her, which she determined should take place on the following day.

Though she had so suddenly formed

plan of leaving her retreat, she ld not think of quitting it, without iting all the places where she had lked with Sir Edmond, frequently pping to survey the scenery which y had together admired. Every- ere she met with something which ex- ed her regret and her tears; and re- ning herself to the mournful sensations ich oppressed her heart—Oh! Nature, e exclaimed, whatever place I may in- bit, he will ever be present to my agination; and may all thy produc- ns ever produce the remembrance of e. Thou thick and impervious Forest, l him, that when I wander through ee, voluntary and alone, I only behold y glooms; but when together we roved idst thy shades, thou wast a retreat of oriferous flowers: let thy enchanting rfumes recal to his mind, the sweetest, e most gentle sensations. Ye little

tuneful Tenants, let your sweet melody warble notes of love; and thou, fair River, let thy gentle murmuring course, be to him an emblem of constancy; and when Night, with her sable mantle, shall envelope every object, which may remind him of me, then let thy plaintive echo, from her airy cell, inform him, that it is a voice which replies to his own.

It was not without the deepest sensations the mind can experience, that Malvina found herself once more in the arms of Mrs. St. Clare, and her beloved Frances. But all the pleasure received, could not efface the melancholy impression which the parting with Sir Edmond had occasioned. It was too recent for her to overcome its shock. It is not on a stormy day, that we can perceive the clear azure of the heavens.

But while the world could not afford any thing which seemed to relieve her anguish, was Sir Edmond equally concerned, by the remembrance of her?—Had he but one thought, of love and Malvina; but one wish, to see her again? Ah! we must doubt of such a thing; and it is necessary to recollect, that in such a character as he possessed, there existed more ardour than tenderness; that his passion was more violent, than deep-rooted. Indeed, is it not sufficient that he was a man!

The difference which is observed in the affection in both sexes, must always be objected to as a reproach. These half of the species, which Nature destines to be men, receive with their sensibility, a mixture of ambition and glory; but those who are formed for mothers,

ought to possess only the soft affections.

While Mrs. Burton was wondering at the sudden appearance of her nephew, and commanding all her servants to answer her inquiries, not one of them could give her any information. But Mr. Fenwick, who was more calculated to gain it from this class of persons, as he was only indebted to fortune for having placed him above them, could therefore descend to them without degrading himself; and learned from the domestics all the gosiping of the neighbourhood, and Sir Edmond's visits to Mrs. Moody; where a handsome young lady, who never went out, always received the visits of Sir Edmond. That she never appeared at the windows but by chance, when she had neglected to draw the curtains, which otherwise were kept constantly closed.

When Mrs. Burton was informed of these particulars, she partly guessed at the truth; and was determined to discover the whole of this mystery.

In consequence, she sent for Mrs. Moody; had her ushered into her dressing-room, where she received her with the utmost affability; questioned her with the most consummate art, and mentioned Malvina and her nephew with seeming kindness. Complained that they had neglected her; that if they would have placed a confidence in her affection, she would never have opposed their union:—and *insisted* on knowing the truth of this affair, that she might grant them her pardon, before they came to require it. Then, addressing herself in a still more interesting manner to Mrs. Moody, saying, it would be of infinite consequence to all those who should con-

tribute to this happy reconciliation; and spoke in the highest terms of the acknowledgments they would receive.

Thus she interested both the heart and vanity of this good woman; drew a secret from her, which neither bribes or threats would have had the power to make her confess, but which she could not refuse to the flattering idea of acting a part in such a particular case.

Mrs. Burton was then informed, of both the day and place where Malvina was married; and notwithstanding the anger she felt by this information, she never betrayed the slightest change in her countenance.—She took leave of Mrs. Moody with the utmost kindness, charging her to be silent with respect to what had passed between them, that she might not deprive her of the pleasure of surprising her nephew and niece.

But the moment she was alone, she gave way to her resentment, and endeavoured to devise every method she could think of, necessary to have the marriage annulled. She had not a doubt but that Lord Stafford, the uncle of Lady Mary Summerhill, would be so extremely hurt by this event, that he would be ready to assist her in revenging it. She determined and prepared immediately to go and consult with him; when Sir Edmond made his unexpected appearance, equipped for travelling, and inquired if she had any commands for London.

SIR J

Malvina, that p
should go to Mi
parture, and in
journey, which

Mrs. Burton, who could so easily conceal her anger, made but few inquiries concerning his last absence, pretending to believe all he told her; and without knowing the real motives of his journey, she heard of it with pleasure. For though she had not a doubt but that Malvina expected something from it, yet she was too well acquainted with Sir Edmond, not to know this separation was most fortunate for the plan she meditated. Therefore, far from offering the lightest objection to it, she approved of his intention; saying, I am very glad that you did not think of setting out without seeing me. I am perfectly sensible of this attention; but may I hope you will enhance it, by having the kindness to call at Lady Dorset's, for a few minutes, whose mansion lays in your road; and you will be so good to deliver a letter of much importance to Mrs. Fenwick, who has been there near fifteen

days, and I can no longer delay sending it.—Sir Edmond promised to take the charge of it, and she instantly retired to her closet to write it.

" My young friend, said she, I have this instant heard they are married; and from the conversation which I had last with you, it will lead you to imagine, that I cannot endure to be treated in this manner. But if I am not deceived in my hopes of revenge, I shall very soon be enabled to burst asunder a chain, which every way mortally offends me.—It is in your power to afford me great assistance in this affair: I wish you, by all means, to make use of every art, to detain Sir Edmond a few days at Lady Dorset's. I do not imagine that you will find the least difficulty in doing this, as you are at liberty to use all the means in your power: they will all be right if you can but succeed.

"While he is forgetting himself with you, I shall employ the time to advantage, in concert with Lord Stafford, to petition government; setting forth Sir Edmond, as being a zealous convert to the French principles, as a subject that would bring dishonour upon his family, and they desired, for that reason, that he might be sent out of the kingdom, to prevent this disgrace.

"Difficult as the execution of this plan may appear, yet by the assistance of our numerous connections, I am almost certain of its success: and when he is on board, and the vessel ready to sail, I shall then make my terms with him; and the only alternative shall be, that I will engage to procure him his liberty, provided he will consent to sign an agreement, by which the marriage shall be annulled. Then I shall immediately

intimate to Madame de Sonzy, that she must instantly send Miss Sherridan to me, unless she will acknowledge her marriage to be void.

"If they both submit to my wishes, I can soon annul the union, which has destroyed all my hopes. But if, on the contrary, they should refuse me, and dare publicly to defy me, I shall at last be revenged by their despair, by taking Sir Edmond from his beloved wife. The detested Malvina, from being deprived of both her husband and her charge, will be rendered so miserable, that I am certain of being successful in that point.

"Adieu, my young friend, I trust to your address; employ all your charms to detain Sir Edmond, that my petition may reach London before he can; that the friends which he may have in the

political line, may not have time to prevent its taking effect.

ANN BURTON."

She returned and gave this letter to Sir Edmond, with an air of so much kindness and freedom, that it would have deceived suspicion itself. This dissimulation was almost useless, as she well knew she had not the least reason to be under any anxiety with regard to its contents; for had he even doubted its tendency, he was so scrupulous in such cases, that she had not the slightest cause to fear his imprudence in this respect.

He then left her; and, according to his promise, he stopped the next evening at Lady Dorset's. He gave Mrs. Burton's letter to Williams, his own servant, to present it directly to Mrs. Fenwick; for it was his intention not to lose

a moment, and to proceed on his journey without getting out of his carriage.

Mrs. Fenwick had no occasion for Mrs. Burton's commands, to induce her to make use of every art to detain Sir Edmond with her; for as she had conceived a real affection for him, in the solitude of Burton-Hall, she, though surrounded by pleasure, and in the midst of the gay world, yet preferred him to every other. Intoxicated with pride, from seeing herself the object of universal attention; yet, perhaps, she would have sacrificed them all, to have obtained a return of Sir Edmond's attention.—The knowledge of his marriage corroded all the joy she felt on his arrival: yet she was so well versed in the manners of the world, that she was a sufficient judge of the difference and situation of a lover who lives in hope, and the husband who is in possession. From these considera-

a, she well knew how to appreciate slight obstacles which marriage, in eral, places between infidelity and love.

. . . .

While Sir Edmond was impatiently ed in his carriage, Williams was ting at Mrs. Fenwick's room door for answer, or if she had any commission his master.—In the interim, this lady reflecting what steps she should take, detain Sir Edmond and ruin Malvina. therefore called Williams into the m; examined him; made a few inqui-—observed that he appeared a cha-ter, that would coincide with, and assist in her plans. She, consequently, ke to him as follows:

. . . . . .

" Williams, your master has fallen in-disgrace with Mrs. Burton, by the st imprudent step he could have en, and which will for ever deprive n of her kindness; yet, if you value

your master, it is in your power to assist me in repairing his folly and imprudence. If you will follow my directions, you may, perhaps, prevent his aunt from disinheriting him; and, likewise, it will be above fifty guineas in your pocket."

The last assertion was quite sufficient to determine Williams; it was, therefore, concerted between him and Mrs. Fenwick, that Williams was to acquaint her with all his master's actions and intentions; and, also, all letters which might pass, were first to be remitted to her.

As soon as this was settled, Mrs. Fenwick sent to inform Sir Edmond, that the letter she had received from Mrs. Burton, required her to write immediately to London, as it was of the utmost importance, and must be sent as soon as possible; and hoped he would be so

ging as to take the charge of it;
as it must delay his journey a few
ites, intreated he would alight, and
into the house during that time.

e immediately acquainted Lady Dor-
with Sir Edmond's being there, who
herself to the carriage to invite him
ter the saloon; and, on his refusal,
taxed him with unpoliteness. This
d him to comply with her pressing
ation; and he followed her, in order
[illegible] Mrs. Fenwick had finished
tter. He however went with an ill
e, without wishing it, into a room
of company; composed of gay,
onable, and, some of the handsomest
en.

on after Mrs. Fenwick entered, with
cket in her hand, which she pre-
d to Sir Edmond, without attempt-
to detain him. He looked at her,

surprised at her looking so handsome, and offered to depart that instant. But Williams had taken care, by his officiousness, to prevent him; for, as he believed that his master would of course stay the night there, he had sent away the horses, and it was too late to procure others.

Mrs. Fenwick pretended to be greatly distressed at having detained him so long, and offered her's, to take him to the next post; but so many delays had made it so late, that he deferred setting out till the next day.

Lady Dorset and her company were rejoiced at his being detained. Mrs. Fenwick alone appeared sorry; she excused herself in a voice of so much apparent veracity, that Sir Edmond had not a doubt of it. She requested his pardon, with such a bewitching grace,

at it was impossible to avoid granting
His being obliged to stay, allowed
n time to examine her at his leisure;
d he was astonished at her improve-
nt.

Every person repeated to him how
ch she was admired, and that the
rld acknowledged her among the most
ebrated beauties. She was no longer
Miss Melmor, whose inexperience
vented her from heightening all the
vantages which Nature had endowed
with. Coquetry had rendered her
te another woman. Each day in-
ased the charms of her figure, and
manners and wit became more al-
ing. Perhaps she had not one quality
ich could attach, but every allurement
t could seduce. In solitude or re-
ement, she would not have been no-
ed; but in the world she attracted
ry one. Her witticisms were so apt,

her sallies pleasant, and her ridicule pointed. Besides, how was it possible to escape those tender and brilliant eyes which always seemed to dwell upon you; that touching smile which expressed so much; those languishing and voluptuous looks; those half sentences, which excite and interest the imagination; those affected efforts, which feign to disguise what it wishes to utter, with a view to enhance the value of what has escaped the lips. In short, all those assumed reveries, those artful well-acted manners, that enchanting carelessness in the dress which has purposely left something unfinished, as if by chance, which one would blush to show.

Perhaps, though I wish to delineate a coquet, I may not then give an adequate idea of Mrs. Fenwick. Yet, with so many advantages, she was allowed to captivate the senses, without ever touch-

ş the heart. Her figure might gain r admirers, for her character alone was med to excite the passions.

It was for this reason that Mrs. Bur-, who understood it so perfectly, was nscious that she possessed exactly those ractions which inflame; but not one those lasting qualities which attach. e, therefore, had selected Mrs. Fen-k as the most eligible person, to di- and separate Sir Edmond from Mal-; to seduce, without fixing him.

'e observe, from this trait, that Mrs. on, who was formerly so extremely e on the conduct of Miss Melmor, ow totally indifferent with regard t of Mrs. Fenwick. Such is the ition which we must attribute to who make such an ostentatious f their virtue, whose origin arises

entirely from pride; and which is instantly effaced, when it is found to interfere with their self-interest.

Attractive as Mrs. Fenwick was, we should not have imagined that the happy lover and husband of the tender Malvina, was so near forgetting his vows. But it must be remembered, that the character was drawn from Nature, and is not an ideal one; that it existed in the eighteenth century. That, in general, Providence has endowed men with more of the sensual in their idea of love, than the refined affection of the heart; but that women, who possess delicate and sensible souls, feel the latter sensation in all its native purity and sincerity. Therefore, it is asserted, that a man, from the excess of his tenderness for one woman, feels a distant attraction for every other; but the instant

at a refined and sensible woman has
ed her selection, all other men are as
rfectly indifferent, as if they were not
existence.

CHAP. V.

TRIAL OF COQUETRY.

IF a knowledge of the v
had developed the graces of Mrs.
wick, it had also given her discernn
and an artful penetration, which i
tively taught her, the moment and
portunity when her plans would tak
fect, and best succeed. She was ce
that Sir Edmond had promised his
to remain faithful to her alone, and
he wished to keep this promise inviola

nsequently, any particular advances uld be impolitic, as they would imme-tely put him upon his guard. On the er hand, it would be equally danger-s to appear as if she had quite forgot n; for it was by that point that she ended to draw him back.

It was a long road, and she was con-ous she could not attempt to reach it the first outset. Therefore, in order succeed, it required all her art to al-e him, without his suspecting it; and be sufficiently agreeable to tempt n, without letting him perceive that was her intention to do so. To be tinually with him, that she might d him on imperceptibly, till she found e had entirely subdued him; without owing him time to recollect what he d forgot, or a moment to reflect on at he felt. Accordingly, that she

might succeed in this plan, she neglected no opportunity of being near him, without ever appearing to wish it. She was particularly careful not to speak to him first, yet had the art of obliging him to address his conversation to her. What was infinitely more dangerous, she used that finesse, which answers with that peculiar reserve, that excites inquiry and prolongs a conversation, by rendering the most indifferent interesting.

Sir Edmond consequently became more easily deceived from not suspecting it, and relied too much on the profound knowledge he thought he had of women; therefore, he believed it impossible to deceive him. He did not know that whatever penetration a man may possess in that respect, he could not, in the course of his life, acquire a sufficient share to develope all the varieties, and the deep arts of coquetry. He fancied

only perceived in Mrs. Fenwick's neg-
ence, the certainty of her having
t the presumption of thinking herself
perior to Malvina; and this thought
orded him pleasure. He cast a look
disdain on all the beauties who appa-
ntly wished to excite his attention,
d only continued near her, who did
t appear to seek for it.

This distinction did not escape Mrs.
wick, and she drew from it a favour-
omen of her triumph. By this
ns she could speak with confidence,
this she most carefully concealed;
by this, she had the power of ren-
g herself still more amiable.

was not to Sir Edmond that she dis-
l the brilliancy of her wit; no, for
e reserved all those little interest-
lf sentences, which appear to es-

cape with such indifference. But when she addressed others, her conversation betrayed that sparkling animation, which by some is considered so attractive, when uttered by lips of the brightest vermillion, and a countenance which was admired by the fashionable world. Yet this fascinating woman was no other than the pretty Miss Melmor; and it may be remembered, that Miss Melmor spared no trouble to please Sir Edmond.

He observed her with astonishment: if she had betrayed the least coolness in her behaviour, he would have perceived that she had some design; or, at least, he would have considered it as proceeding from jealousy. He observed she displayed her wit to others. With him she seemed only to speak her real sentiments, which she made appear natural and amiable: this certainly was a flattering and

very particular distinction, but it was involuntary. She slightly hinted their former connections, and the friendship which had succeeded it.

This idea rendered Mrs. Fenwick still more interesting; he drew nearer to her, that he might converse more at his ease; and from curiosity only, wished to discover whether she saw him with any emotion.—But their conversation was soon interrupted by the festivity of the rest of the company; and Mrs. Fenwick was the first to assist in the general gaiety.

Dancing was mentioned. It was Mrs. Fenwick's delight: in that she displayed all her graces. If her manner of dancing was not so dignified as Malvina's, it was light and voluptuous; her steps and her looks were not adapted to attract the

heart, but to inflame the senses. It was acknowledged that she only caused a momentary impression; but it is not always possible to resist momentary impressions!

By degrees Sir Edmond began to be elevated: Mrs. Fenwick, attentive to his every motion, perceived and took advantage of it, to ask for a waltz. She knew, from the success of her first attempts, that she might be permitted to hazard another. She let Sir Edmond observe, that she only wished to dance with him. How could he refuse her, even if he had not felt a wish to hold this charming creature in his arms: his self-love had been excited by the discourse of several of the young gentlemen during the ball, who had mentioned Mrs. Fenwick with rapture; and described her as the fascinating, but the most indifferent of women.

n short, Burton, said Lord Wigby, a
ng man of high birth, and an agree-
e figure, will you believe, that after
ing passed more than eight days with
, in all the freedom of old acquaint-
es, in the country; and tried every
leavour to render her sensible of my
, I could only obtain a few tender
ks and kind sentences, which is all I
hope for: and there is not any one
e, who has been more successful than
self. I am also certain, that even
, Burton, with all the brilliant advan-
es which have given you success, I
confident that you will not succeed
better with her.

Me, said Sir Edmond, with a smile,
ich expressed how certain he was of
quering, if he chose to make the at-
pt.

Yes, yourself, replied Lord Wigby, and

we shall soon be convinced; for I know you Burton, and I am certain of it:—if you take no pains to conquer, you will find how impossible it will be to succeed.

Yes, yes, added the rest of the young men, Wigby speaks from experience, and we shall now see if there is not one woman who can resist Sir Edmond Burton.

I will do more, continued Lord Wigby, encouraged by the applause of his companions, I will wager, if he will, two hundred guineas, that he will not obtain any more from Mrs. Fenwick than we have.

Sir Edmond possessed more delicacy and honor, than to be capable of revealing the intimacy which had formerly existed between Miss Melmor and himself; and we may imagine from his character, that he with difficulty suppressed that pride,

hich would only have been displayed
om cruelty. The remembrance of Mal-
na occasioned him to make this sacrifice;
id he refused to bet with Lord Wigby,
id preferred supporting the ridicule of
s friend's pleasantry, rather than offend
e woman he adored. This, from such
character as his, was the highest proof
could give; for it was not usual with
n for the heart to vanquish his vanity.
t that vanity, which in general is the
se of so much mischief, and in reality
y be termed inhuman in its baneful
cts, was going to be gratified in its
n. Sir Edmond, it is true, had refused
fully to seduce Mrs. Fenwick, and de-
mined to persist in his resolution; but
he same time he was highly gratified
ceive so many public marks of her
ality.

t was at this instant she went up to
, and whispered the dance is going to

commence, I am passionately fond of it, was I not a stranger to the gentlemen who are here; the only one who is to dance, is the only person Kitty would wish for her partner.

He looked at Mrs. Fenwick to penetrate whether this was said with design. Never before had she appeared so lovely; and with a look of the utmost tenderness, he informed her she was always his Kitty. He saw his friends remark with surprise and envy, the preference which he received from her; and he could not resist the desire of triumphing in their presence. It was decided, that he should leave Mrs. Fenwick after the reels. He advanced, and twining his arms round her elegant form, beheld the bosom of Kitty through the thin gauze which shaded it; and they both began this dangerous dance, which the voluptuous imagine awakens improper sensations, creates courage, and emboldens innocence.

Soon after, this brilliant society sat wn to a sumptuous collation, composed every delicacy, and the most exquisite nes. The light hand of Mrs. Fenwick lped to empty the flasks of champagne. e always began, and ended with Sir lmond, and it might be said, that with s rested the sole power of animating n; as she wished to employ other ns, besides those of beauty, in order to ceed.

As Sir Edmond had already felt her wer, the mirth, and the company, the nes of the wine, and the alluring looks his charming neighbour, all, every ng conspired against his resolution, d the happiness of Malvina. This unncipled man did not recollect how freently it happens, that one moment y utterly destroy that peace of mind, ich the longest life can never retrieve. t he no longer knew what he did; his

she had inst
led her to fa
She thereu
requesting S
stay at Lady
request recall
reply, and the
that he would

Without inv
was in, he fou
fearful that he
command over
ing Mrs. Fow

tended not to have understood Sir Edmond; without again mentioning his departure, she maintained her smiling countenance, occupying herself entirely in endeavouring to make him forget, what she had been so unlucky as to call to his remembrance. Certain that she must take advantage of the present opportunity, or risque the loss of it for ever, she consequently determined on the part she would act.

She arose from table, and proposed one of those innocent amusements which the country allows; but which, for those who have drank too much wine, is esteemed dangerous. She was consequently blindfolded, and ran about with her arms extended, though she first very dexterously ted one part of the handkerchief from r eyes, that she might distinguish those om she caught; and on perceiving Sir mond near her, she threw herself into

his arms, with a laugh, pretending to have mistaken him for an old nobleman who was there. Soon after, she was commanded, by an artful manœuvre of her own, to pay a forfeit, which was to embrace Sir Edmond, which she declared she would not obey. He of course wished to sieze what was refused, and she endeavoured to prevent him, with that kind of faint resistance which is artfully assumed to enhance the value of what is taken, and under this pretended reserve she knew how to grant many more than were asked; and turning her head at the moment he was near her cheek, by that means their lips met. She then pretended to be very angry, and punished his temerity with a slight blow with her hand, and ran away. He followed her to be revenged, while the rest of the company were taken up with their play, and were all running from one room to another, laughing and calling after each other.

Mrs. Fenwick, in the midst of this festy, was careful not to lose sight of Edmond; and when they entered the ing room, she pretended that she hed to be revenged on Lord Wigby, o had snatched away her bouquet, and ing a large glass of water, she endeatred to throw it upon him, instead of ich, she artfully let it fall on her own es. She shrieked, and complained, l flew towards her own chamber to nge her clothes. Every one followed ; Sir Edmond was before her, as he hed to shut the door that she might enter. But she was so quick, that got up to him, and artfully feigning t she wished to prevent any one from ng in, hastily pushed Sir Edmond in ore her, and closing the door after m, drew the bolt. Thus was she, as wished, left alone with him in her amber.

spective apartments: a
the rest of the compan
example. But Sir Edm
Fenwick remained alon
have continued there
when Williams went to c
six the next morning, h
found in his own apartm

CHAP. VI.

JOURNEY TO LONDON.

THE sun had shone in all its lendor for some hours above the horizon, len Sir Edmond in some confusion, th a hurried step, went to call Williams, d enquired in an angry tone why the aise was not ready?

Williams smiling, replied that the horses d been put to the carriage, and remained waiting for three hours; but that

ness of the morning, i
of Malvina, were all
Edmond, as they rep
fault. Get my carı
diately, said he, in a p
and acquaint me the
door, and in future, 1
act without my order

While it was prepa
his apartment: and tc
he endeavoured to wr
was then he experienc
was to use dissimula

uld have confessed his crime; but he
ll remembered what she had told him,
l that it would certainly be fatal to
h a mind as she possessed, if she heard
his being unfaithful. This recollection
held his pen. These letters, which
e to have been the only solace for the
ence of her society, were now become
punishment. Thus, when love and
fidence have once been abused, its
nge is complete; when it has to de-
nd to the mortifying constraint, it is
essitated to support; instead of that
et intercourse of reciprocal confidence
pure affection, which is the only solid
s of happiness in this life. Edmond
conscious of the difference of this, in
expressions he made use of in his
r; they wanted that force, which the
of having acted wrong, deprived
of; and they even tinged the as-
nces of his affection, though they
not the less true: but the remem-

brance of his guilt deprived them of that passion, that energy of expression, that sweet delirium which the heart delights to feel, when it loves with native purity and refinement, and beholds no other object but one, to whom it could attach itself. If he felt thus, how much more and to what excess, would Malvina love it. If he only wrote a few lines, he might betray himself less; but would not this brevity be more likely to expose him? for it would not be natural, he would not have acted so the evening before. One moment, then, might destroy confidence, and one fault his happiness. Ah, how much did the misery which he experienced, make him detest Mrs. Fitzwick. He determined, that from henceforth his extreme coolness towards her should repair the offence which he had committed against Malvina! This vow which came from his heart, allowed a momentary tranquillity to his conscience

l permitted him to write with more
ıdor and facility.

. . . . . .

He then began another letter, wherein
informed Malvina that he had been
liged to stay a few hours at Lady Dor-
's, and how insupportable this deten-
ı had been to him. He slightly men-
ned Mrs. Fenwick, accompanied with
e utmost contempt: and never had he
t it so powerfully, as when he wrote

"Oh! my Malvina, he continued, I
ve no other wish than to meet you
ain. It is therefore as much on my own
count, as your's, that I wish to hasten
th all possible speed, that I may
air the time I have lost here: and
e sooner return to that felicity which I
ve enjoyed in such an exquisite degree,
d which my most ardent wishes are,
at I may enjoy in future."

Whilst he was writing, Williams took that opportunity of informing Mrs. Fenwick, that his master was ready to depart, and this dangerous Syren wished to ensnare him still farther. She ran into his room, threw herself into his arms, bathed in tears: she pressed, she intreated him not to leave her so soon; she almost fell at his feet: her eyes full of langour, her lips breathing voluptuousness, while pleasure had tinged her skin with its softest bloom.

Sir Edmond pushed her from him, and turning his head aside, leave me, said he, I have already staid too long.

Edmond, cried she, has Kitty then no right to your kindness? she only asks for one day, and she cannot obtain that.

Do you not think your behaviour rather ungrateful, Kitty? replied he, disengaging his hand from her's; an indispen-

luty calls me to London, and were nore beautiful and seducing than ther in the world, I should be in- able to neglect it for you.

ll, replied she, with spirit, if such r situation, that you cannot grant lay to her, who has given you so , you cannot however prevent me following you. I wish to go to on, Sir Edmond; Mrs. Burton's af- require it; consequently she will ler it extremely attentive in me to take this journey, and then I shall st have the pleasure of being with ly man I ever loved.

u think of going to London, Kitty? d Sir Edmond, astonished and con- : but I declare it shall not be with

it must not be with you, she an-

…tion which
You may un
for I go on
whose busin
departure for
having any r
proofs of affe
you, you have
me so cruelly,
long a journey

Sir Edmond,
Fenwick's inten
ful it might be n

ived not to keep his word. With this ertion she was so well satisfied, that she nt to prepare every thing for her de-rture, and in the interim, he went ntly down stairs, then into the stable, d had one of his horses saddled, fearing e noise of the carriage might inform rs. Fenwick of his intention, ordering illiams to meet him in London with e chaise; at the same time he gave him letter to Malvina, which he was to nd by the first conveyance; he then rote a billet with his pencil in the great-t haste to Mrs. Fenwick, sufficiently nder to calm her anger, and permit him depart in peace.

Mrs. Fenwick was much enraged when e heard of Sir Edmond's being gone; it the billet which Williams presented r, gave her the hope of revenging her-lf.—The contents were as follow:—

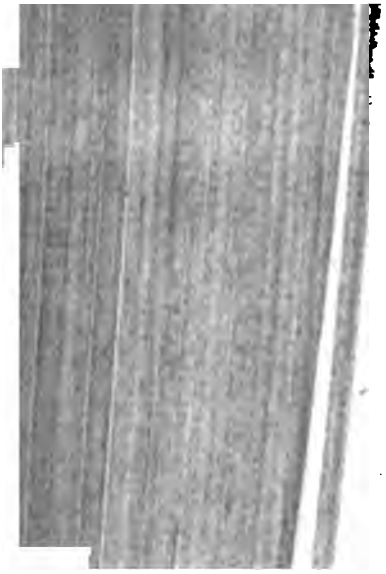
SIR EDMOND BURTON TO MRS. FENWICK.

"I depart, Kitty, overcome with gratitude for your kind favours, though unworthy of them, since they have made me forget the most sacred of all duties. If you are as good as you are handsome, you will pardon me for a departure which you ought to believe was absolutely indispensible, as I am determined upon it: and I acknowledge, when the recollection of last night presents itself, it requires nothing less than the impossibility of staying, to determine me to leave you."

Mrs. Fenwick read this billet several times, she was not to be thus deluded: she became more exasperated, and determined to be revenged upon Malvina, for the contempt of Sir Edmond.

By the agreement which had been made with Williams, she was in possession of

the letter addressed to Malvina. She considered some time before she could decide what plan to adopt. She then called Williams in, and spoke to him as follows:—I shall set out to morrow for London, in the carriage which your master has left here; you shall go to day, and deliver this letter to Madame de Sorcy. Tell her that he waits for an answer at Lady Dorset's, that his plan was to have gone directly to London, but that Mrs. Fenwick had intreated him to wait for her, and he therefore immediately complied with her wishes. All these particulars must not be told as a natural recital, but as an imprudence which escaped involuntary from you: and when you leave her, take particular care to drop this billet which your master wrote to me, and which I am going to seal again, that she may imagine you had it to give me, when he had determined



which I am
him a card,
arrive, to gi
swer, that I
cessary for y
you may go;
my health d
may be assu
execute my o
rewarded on y

Williams set
structions, an
wick departed

"I wished so much to accomplish our wishes, that I have determined to allow your nephew to London, for I have recollected, that if your petition to the minister is found to be supported by a woman whom nature has endowed with some power of pleasing, it may be more favourably received; and the hopes of being serviceable to you on such an occasion, will make me easily despise the fatigue of so long a journey, and the malicious interpretation which may be given to it."

Mrs. Fenwick, being steadily determined in a case in which she hoped entirely to seduce Sir Edmond, and use every endeavour which her charms afforded, to insure the success of Mrs. Burton's project; for the pride inherent in her character, added to her love, excited in her heart a degree of malevolence, even be-

yond what was natural to it; and there was not any thing she would not have attempted, and executed, to be revenged on Malvina. Such was her disposition, when she arrived in London, three days after Sir Edmond. She stopped at some hotel which he inhabited, and enquired if he was within? She was informed, that he was just gone out, and, perhaps, he might not return till the evening. She congratulated herself on his absence, as it would afford her time to form such arrangements, as would be best adapted to her views. Therefore, as soon as she had settled herself in an apartment, which was next to that he occupied, she then desired, that, as soon as he returned, they would desire him to walk up to her, without informing him who she was.

Sir Edmond's first business on his arrival in London, had been to seek Lord Sherridan, and was informed that he was

at of town, and would not return till
e next day. He enquired the place to
hich he was gone, that he might follow
im; but no person could inform him.
ach following day, he met the same
isappointment. Thus foiled in his at-
mpts and wishes, he returned to his ho-
l, melancholy and dispirited, without
aving the power to write an account of
is disappointments to Malvina, to ex-
lain the length of his stay in London;
ecause, he was very conscious, that
ose hours he had spent at Lady Dor-
t's, was the sole cause of his missing
e opportunity of meeting with Lord
herridan. As he was returning home, he
flected, that it would be much better
r him to open his heart to Malvina, in-
ur her reproaches, and implore her par-
on, than always dissemble with her,
nd leave her to suffer from anxiety.
h! why should I any longer defer con-

fessing my crime? Can I doubt, whether she would forgive me?

Entirely occupied with these ideas, he was just going to enter his chamber, when he was informed, that a lady had lately arrived, who wished to see him immediately. His mind being absorbed by Malvina, he fancied that this must certainly be her, who was come to meet him. In consequence of this thought, he hurried into the above-mentioned room, and entered it with precipation. It was nearly dark; he beheld the figure of a woman, reclined upon a sopha; he flew towards her, and pressed her in his arms; but he too soon was convinced, that it was Mrs. Fenwick; and, pushing her from him, he exclaimed, Ah! heavens! it is not her.

The artful Kitty did not complain, but

trembled; and, forcing Sir Edmond
seat himself by her, she took both his
nds; and, looking at him for a mo-
nt in silence, she at last said, I see
y plain, Sir Edmond, that it was not
whom you expected; but say, un-
teful man, has this rival, which thy
rt prefers—can she have so many
ims to thy love, as I have? To be-
d you, has she braved the danger of
ng and tiresome journey, the anger
Mrs. Burton, the reproaches of an of-
ded husband, and the opinion of a
licious public? In short, is she here?

Presumptuous Kitty! replied Sir Ed-
nd, take care how you compare your-
f with her, who is above all compari-
; and do not imagine, that I shall
r attribute to love, what is the effect
your folly and obstinacy.

Kitty, who was much offended at such

ter to endea
forth all the
seduce him,
Did she attai
all the men
justice than
disdain to int
which was so
say yes, the
their good opi
the commissic
now entirely
obviate this i
displeasing an

:re she had taken up her residence, same evening; and for daring to stay :re she was, while waiting the arrival Lord Sherridan. For the readiness ı which he had yielded to the se- ing advances of this artful woman, ıld have caused a diffidence of him-

which might have produced the t salutary effects, as he could not be ›rant, that the first step was the most cult; and that, being too confident, are frequently liable to be betrayed error. If the first fault does not m the conscience sufficiently for it to lve never to become guilty a second :, it is, then, in danger of progres- ly leading us to the commission of a ısand others, which are the conse- ıces that result entirely from the ; for, if we are so liable to fall on first trial, may it not be deemed the ss of temerity, to permit ourselves

again to be tempted by the same danger? This self-confidence too frequently proves but a slight barrier against the attraction of the senses; and, in the end, we must, from conviction, allow it arrogates to itself, what it never attempts to correct; therefore, can never expect to accomplish, while the veil of self-delusion is constantly worn. But that real humility, the invariable concomitant of merit, if it errs once, it errs not again; but, depending for support on a superior power, it rises above itself, and invariably pursues the path of rectitude. If Edmond had doubted himself, would it not have appeared, as if he had doubted the sincerity of his affection?—No. As he had been led astray once, he ought, therefore, to have armed himself against a second fault. But, on the contrary, had Malvina been surrounded by all the pleasures of the world; tempted by every

alluring, seducing artifice that could have been devised against her, yet, from the strength of her affection alone, she would have blushed, if, in the most secret thought of her heart, she had found any reason for being obliged to use any precaution against herself. Why, then, did not the same sentiment produce the same effects with Sir Edmond? and, why must he be so inferior, as to be faithless? But, I must confess, in such a character as his, even a real affection could not act as a defence against the seduction of the senses. How very different is this in women! When a pure affection occupies the heart, it is for ever fixed, and produces that uniform stability, which elevates it above all those pleasures which are tainted by vanity. It exalts, and refines the heart to the most celestial purity. It can devote itself to the most generous, the most heroic actions, when it has the full power of dis-

may be known to be alsc
affections of the heart.

CHAP. VII.

FATAL NEWS.

NIGHT had for some hours enveloped the world in darkness; and silence more than peace reigned in the sweet retirement where Malvina resided. Mrs. St. Clare, distressed at the anxiety which she observed oppressed her friend, had followed her, and in order to amuse her mind, proposed reading to her, which Malvina accepted, perfectly sensible of her kind intention; she was just interest-

ing herself in what was reading, when Williams was shewn into the room. She uttered an exclamation, arose, and in a hurried voice, enquired if his master was near?

He, madam, replied Williams, smiling; no really, I left him at Lady Dorset's.

How,—is he not going to London?

As to that, madam, I believe he certainly did intend to go; but—

But what unforeseen accident has happened to prevent him?

No other than his own will, madam, and faith it was no wonder, that such a society of handsome women should detain my master.

Malvina turned pale, but scorning to

:errogate a servant concerning the con-
ct of her husband, she only enquired
he had not brought a letter from Sir
lmond?.

I beg your pardon madam, said he,
:e is one, giving it to her.

She received it in silence, and was
ing into the next room that she might
:use it at her leisure, when Williams
:vented her by saying, if she meant to
swer it, she would be pleased to do it
it night, because his master was waiting
him at Lady Dorset's.

Your master waits for it, interrupted
; scarcely able to restrain her tears,
painful idea obtruding, that if Sir
mond had time to wait for his servant,
certainly might have come himself, as
knew the pleasure it would have af-
ded her.

Yes, madam, he replied; he de
I would make all the haste I po
could, that I might not prevent hi
parture; yet, I think, Mrs. Fer
will prevail for a longer stay at
Dorset's; for she is a lady, to whe
can never refuse any thing; thoug
be sure, as she is to go with h
London—

My God, my dear, exclaimed
Saint Clare, alarmed at the uncon
alteration she observed in the co
nance of Malvina, you are not
You must have something.

I can only find it here, said Mal
almost suffocated by the oppressio
her heart, shewing Sir Edmond's le
Leave me, if you please, for a mom
that I may read it, and see if I can
believe that he—

The perusal of it, without entirely satisfying her, yet served to calm her agitated heart. Edmond assured her, that he was detained against his will; and the reasons which he gave, appeared satisfactory to Malvina; yet, as love possesses an intuitive sensation, which seldom deceives itself, it was in vain that her reason endeavoured to persuade her, that Sir Edmond's delay was right. Some secret resentiment whispered a fear, that he had been faithless. But, as it was only a presentiment, she determined not to let Sir Edmond know of this distress, which she could not account for.

In this uncertainty she arose, to answer the letter; when, in passing the door, she heard the voice of Williams, saying to Mrs. St. Clare, indeed, maam, I repeat it to you, that my master only staid on her account, for he never quitted her a moment; and I am but too

Yet, madam, he replied, I would make all the ... could; that I might ... parture; yet, I ... will prevail for ... Dorset's; for ... can never re... be sure, ... London—

... of it, madam ... My ... g there these two days ... Saint ... to wait for her, but that ... alone ... e with her longer; and, when he ... that he must leave her at last, he ... ged her to accompany him, under ... me pretence. It was Jenny, who gave ... me this information, as her mistress al... ways confides every thing to her.

Mrs. St. Clare! cried Malvina, from the next room. Mrs. St. Clare!

What! my dear, replied she, running

r. She saw her pale, and ready to
You have heard every thing, said
with terror.

r pity's sake, send away that man,
Malvina, or his presence will be the
ı of me.

ɔu may go, Williams, said Mrs. St.
ɐ; and, taking the arm of her
rnful friend within hers, they entered
ıext room.

alvina seated herself, but could not
ı. After a moment's silence, she
ed steadily at Mrs. St. Clare, and
tell me, my dear friend (for, in
:umult of my present ideas, my heart
ıs a stranger to itself), which ought
believe, Williams, or my husband:
l this letter of Edmond's, and inform
what I ought to conclude.

terly dislik
bious whe
nion of it
moments
calmness,
ined any
letter shall
so meanly c
to imagine
that he wish
ever hateful
raise in my
place the utm
and Malvina

feet. She thought the hand-writing Edmond's. She took it up, and ddered, as she read the address of s. Fenwick. The billet was sealed, was certainly given to Williams, to ver it to her, and he had forgot it. ight elucidate the whole of this mys- ; yet, her trembling hand durst not ak the seal. She silently shewed it to s. St. Clare; and then, letting it fall n her hands, she covered her eyes with n, as if to conceal that world from sight, in which she had only expe- ced sorrow and deceit. However, s. St. Clare thought proper to open the et. She had seen, "I depart to-mor- , overcome with gratitude for your d favours," &c. She trembled at the ct it would produce on Malvina, and hed to prevent her from reading this l billet. But Malvina, perceiving s. St. Clare's design, took it from her. , said she, I must know my decree.

I told you, I would believe no other tha
himself; and I shall ascertain what I hav
left to hope for.

She then read the billet, and continue
reading it for a long time, without shew
ing any signs of emotion, or shedding
single tear. But, when she had con
cluded, she put her hand to her heart
The blow is given, said she; my destiny
is fulfilled; and I have truly deserved it.

Mrs. St. Clare, fearfully alarmed at her resignation, went to her, spoke, and embraced her. But she never replied; her cheeks were pale, and cold as ice. There was a fixed wildness in her look. She then arose, walked some paces about the room in silence; then came back, and took up the billet, and exclaimed, I would not believe any other than thyself, Edmond; and, thou hast deceived me! I placed all my confidence in thee; and,

thou hast betrayed it! Thy guilt is not momentary; since, it was with her, whom thou hast before seduced, that you have consented to go. Is it, when near your Kitty, that you have dared to address me with expressions of love, and to speak with frivolity and contempt of her, whose kind favours have rendered you so grateful? Oh! Edmond! cruel Edmond! are you become more than unfaithful? and wish to deprive me of the power of reading that heart, which I no longer occupy? Malvina might have supported a transient infidelity; but, how can she survive thy perfidious duplicity?

My dearest Malvina, said Mrs. St. Clare, pressing her in her arms, and weeping over her, perhaps, he may not be so guilty as you imagine. Do you wish, that we should go and join him in London, or at Lady Dorset's? Perhaps,

there only wants a proper explanation, to bring returning peace to your mind.

You do not think so, my friend? replied Malvina, with a gloomy countenance. This billet leaves me perfectly convicted. I have nothing more to ask, or learn. You see, by it, that he goes against his inclination. This journey, the intention of which would be to reconcile us, would appear an insupportable duty to him, who can think only of his Kitty; and he can only feel pain, when deprived of her society. Oh! this woe unutterable! which I have never before experienced. While I was counting each moment of his absence, by my anguish, and every step he took, by the throbs of my heart, he was resigning himself to the delight of a new amour; forgetting his vows, my grief, and, consequently, myself.

Williams wishes to know, if your an-

swer is ready, Madam, said Tomkins, opening the door.

It will be, presently, replied Malvina, much agitated, if he will wait a few minutes. I have only to bid him adieu—an adieu, which will not be long; and, taking the first sheet of paper which came to her hand, she wrote as follows:—

MALVINA TO EDMOND.

"Edmond, you have forgot your vows. You have deceived me! This world is already vanished to me; since I ought no longer to love you, when you live for another. Malvina ought to finish her existence; and that heart, from which she must endeavour to tear your image, will soon cease to beat. Ah! in that fatal moment, glance at least one pitying look on the unfortunate being who loves you; that, in your hours of

retirement, she may not be quite obliterated from your memory; that her name may be sometimes breathed from your lips; and that her tears may leave some remembrance in your heart. Oh! Edmond! may I hope, that the account of my death may not find you perfectly indifferent? Let not the recollection of your Kitty follow me to my tomb. On beholding the cold and inanimate stone, which will cover that heart of which you alone was the idol, perhaps, you may feel some regret; perhaps, you may say, as you drop a tear, sleep on, poor creature! you now may rest in peace. Adieu! Edmond, adieu! I thought, that I must no longer love you. You have chilled my heart, by your duplicity; and, from this moment, all connexion between us is at an end. Keep far from me, cruel and unkind Edmond, who hast made a jest of my affection. When you first asked my love, I was dejected, and ex-

hausted by grief. Why did you not respect my sorrow? What pleasure could you find in wishing to augment it, by deceiving me, who was sufficiently unhappy, and who had placed her confidence in you? Do you not know, that you have robbed me of my peace, innocence, and self-esteem? Do you not know, that, in forcing me to love you, I have deviated from those duties I vowed to perform; for which you must be responsible to heaven, as well also for my faults, and my consequent misery? All the tears that I have shed, will be witnesses against you. Oh! Edmond! what is it that I have done, that you have conducted me to the brink of this frightful abyss? Until the fatal hour, which attached my affections to you, my pure thoughts were uttered before the shade of my Clara. But your conversation, and the love with which you inspired me, weakened my

soul, and I had only a faint remembrance of my vow. I existed for you alone. I felt no other sentiment but my affection, and no other duty, but that of rendering you happy. And yet—you have deceived me. Edmond has forgot Malvina! Go then, cruel author of my misery, fly to thy pleasures. But you may, perhaps, even in the centre of that brilliant and attractive world, meet with a similar misery to that which I now endure. Ah! Gracious God! what do I say? another! Can you love another, as I love you? Another will be the object of all thy thoughts, as thou art of mine! No! No! This fancy is only the compliment of my grief. Ah! I entreat and conjure you, Edmond, do not love; never let it enter your heart; do not add to the dreadful torment of not being beloved, the image of another's happiness; and that I may at least know, that thy heart is always insensible; and that, if I have not touched

it, no other may have had that power. But, wherefore, this *weak*, this cruel prayer? Why wish indifference to a being, who is so dear? Ah! how inexpressibly dear to me? Edmond! dear Edmond! Be happy. I wish it. My sorrowful heart beats to this wish, with all the fervency of the purest, the most sincere affection. Though I shall never behold you again, yet I shall rejoice; for will it not afford me the sweetest satisfaction, to release you from the tyranny of the chain which unites us? Be happy, be satisfied; it shall be broken. Be happy. Edmond, Malvina is lost to you for ever. The moment that you left her, was the last time you were ever to behold her; and, after this letter, you will never receive another line, to remind you, that Malvina continues in existence.

"Adieu! Adieu!"

On concluding these lines, the pen fell

from her hand. She turned her eyes on Mrs. St. Clare. My strength is exhausted, said she. I feel, as if I had expended the vital strength of my life in that letter. Will your kindness oblige me, by folding it, and send it for me? I believe, I shall die.

As she said this, her eyes closed, a mortal paleness overspread her face; and she sunk, lifeless, into the arms of her friend Mrs. St. Clare; who, terrified, called for assistance; and, by her watchful attention, recalled her to life.

Alas! why would she not let her die? What greater kindness can we implore of heaven, than to lose our life, when we are deprived of happiness?

CHAP. VIII.

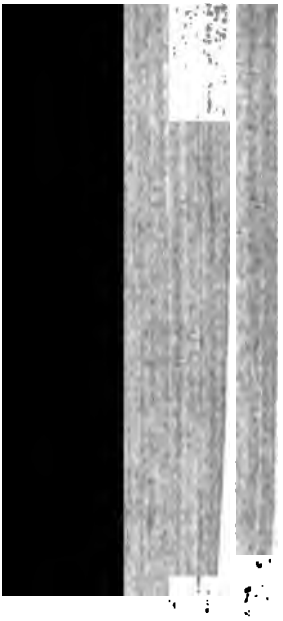
:CEIT DISCOVERED AND PUNISHED.

AS soon as Williams had re-ed Malvina's letter, he hastened on journey to London; and, calling at ly Dorset's, he heard that Mrs. Fen-k had been gone two days; he there-: set out again instantly. When he ved at Sir Edmond's lodgings, he en-red, before he entered, if Mrs. Fen-k was there? that, he might, accord-

wick did not allow hi
pense, as she had been
watch for him; the in
voice, she ran down
door. I have been
waiting for you, said
dame de Sorcy's lette
immediately, and prete
not arrive till early to-
when you will be certai
master at home; and, i
you carried the lette
Sorcy yourself, tell hi
did not find an expres
Fenwick was to take ch

him, you can say, that having so much company (you may mention Mr. Prior as one) she had not an opportunity of answering it. Do not be the least intimidated at the idea of your master's anger, in case he should ever discover that you have deceived him; Mrs. Burton and myself will answer for you, and you will be most generously rewarded. But while you wait for that, here are five and twenty guineas. Go—get away as fast as possible, I tremble lest Sir Edmond should come in; for should he surprise us together, our plans will prove entirely abortive, and yourself ruined. He instantly obeyed, and she hurried up to her apartment to read Malvina's letter.

As her heart was not absolutely destitute of feeling, perhaps it might have been affected if her vanity had not revolted against the impressions which she was incapable of imitating. Yet her self-



allow herself to pity h
deavoured to ridicule
the art, during the tim
the hotel, of intercepti
which Sir Edmond ha
vina: and she was dete
finishing stroke, by w
that unfortunate crea
Edmond, tired and fat
thetic complaints, had
epistle wherein she had
lineated her despair, wi
the trouble to read it.
she must inform her,
tears or complaints th

oint out to her the best method she
ld use to obtain it. In acting in this
ner, Mrs. Fenwick had not a thought
ıe dreadful consequences which might
ıe from it. She permitted herself to be
sed with the pleasure (if pleasure it
be called) of being revenged, without
ıidering that she would give the most
ıbitable proofs of her deceit, which
ht ruin her in a moment. But her
t and frivolous mind never looked
ard, or thought of the future. Con-
ently she never possessed the least
ction, or cared for any person but
elf; therefore she had not the slight-
dea of the injury she was committing
nst Malvina. As her own vanity
g hurt was to her the greatest of all
ows, she undoubtedly imagined that
rival's was nothing more, as nothing
er opinion could exceed it.

ır Edmond could not account for

Malvina's silence, nor for the excuse she had given Williams. In that situation, what company could she receive, and particularly, what company ought to have prevented her writing to her husband? Williams had mentioned Mr. Prior, and from that Edmond conceived a thousand suspicions: not detrimental to Malvina's fidelity, but with regard to those who wished to defame her. It was not Sir Edmond who could suspect his wife, he knew her too well; and Mrs. Fenwick, who fabricated the calumny, should have recollected, that this accusation might be the very means of bringing her plots to light, which she had enveloped Sir Edmond with: as the husband of Malvina would never descend to suspect her virtue.

These suspicions having arisen in the mind of Sir Edmond, he ordered Williams to attend him instantly. On putting se-

veral questions to him, his ambiguous nd evasive answers convinced his master, hat his surmises were not without foun- ation.

Williams framed an excuse to leave ir Edmond for a few minutes, and on is sending for him, that he might gain ore information from him, he was in- rmed that Williams had disappeared, nd no one could tell what was become f him. This immediately confirmed Sir dmond's suspicions; and a thousand ars on Malvina's silence, and many cor- sponding presentiments, arose in his ind.

He wrote a letter, in which he expressed e surprise and anxiety he laboured un- er; and carried it himself to the post, arful of trusting it to any one, as he ight be surrounded by persons who were ise. He reflected with pain on all the

uneasiness which his wife must suffer, and thus rendered the ideas of his guilt still more insupportable. He felt such an utter detestation for Mrs. Fenwick, that he avoided the sight of her, that it might not perpetually remind him, that he had for a moment forgot Malvina. He went continually to Lord Sherridan's house, in hopes of hearing that he was returned, but he was constantly disappointed, for each day his stay was prolonged; and as Sir Edmond did not receive any account from Malvina, he earnestly wished to set off directly to ascertain himself the occasion of this silence. But then, how could he determine to leave London, without having gained the permission for Frances to remain with her? And in this perplexing situation, he was uncertain in what manner he ought to act.

Mrs. Fenwick, irritated by his conti-

absence, was only more zealous in
ing the plan which Mrs. Burton had
ed; and not being quite so confi-
n the justice of her cause, she would
ust it to a public investigation, but
ed it in a private manner, where she
employ an eloquence, which few
could resist. Her attractions, the
of Lord Stafford, and the other
s, by whom she was supported, all
rred in obtaining the success of
Burton's detestable plan. The order
ather wrested, than granted; but
as of no consequence. In a few
perhaps, Sir Edmond would be taken
m his wife; and, soon, the mighty
might roll its waves between them.
ncied, she could anticipate her be-
r on the sea-side; pale, dejected,
dying; raising her hands towards
a supplicating manner; murmur-
ast, long, an eternal adieu; and he
not go, to receive her last sigh.

Edmond, w
scious of the
he was to bec
return to Ma
had just hear
arrived in tow
flew to him;
immediately u
Sir Edmond
was with Lord
ing physiogn
ment, regarde
attention; and
not the nephe
burgh? also, i
Edmond bow
firmative. Th
with an unco
sion, and dep
expression of p

Sir Edmond
by the busine

had not noticed any thing which

He was intent upon what man-
: should introduce the subject,
was of so delicate a nature, and
ch the happiness of his life de-
. The hopes and fears, by which
agitated, made him hesitate lon-
n he would otherwise have done.
herridan perceived his embarrass-
and, without knowing the cause,
oured to relieve him, by beginning
nversation. Certainly, Sir, it is
urton, to whom I am indebted
honour of seeing you; and I am
stonished, that she did not men-
in her letter, which I found here
return; wherein she informs me,
ccording to our agreement, she
en my daughter from Madame de
since her marriage.

t is it you say, my lord? inter-
Sir Edmond. Is Mrs. Burton in-

formed of my
had the cruel
from the arms

Your marria
astonished. B
who are the h
cy? The per
as I am infor
mean wretch,

What an i
claimed Sir E
And how coul
you would not
tered herself,
completing he
my innocent,
lord, it is me-
Malvina's hus
consent, to p
live with us, t
of the most

dertook this journey to London. And, give you my word, I will unite with her, in every care and attention, that she may be rendered worthy the family from om she is descended. Oh! my lord! en you are now conscious, that they h to deceive you; when they have ca- niated Malvina, who is now, perhaps, ing of the grief, which I know the loss her darling must have occasioned? will ou, after this, reject my entreaties? h! my lord! quickly speak the word, e word, that I may fly to the assist- nce of my wife, my adored wife.

Undoubtedly, Sir Edmond, what you ve told me is very surprising, replied rd Sherridan; and I really find that adame de Sorcy has not ceased to de- rve my confidence, since you are the usband she has chosen. But, though her sorrow affects me, yet, I am a father, nd the fate of my child is of conse-

quence; Mrs. Bu
fond of my daugh
ceal any thing fr
hesitating. Man
ticulars of which
have very much i
if Mrs. Burton's
pensate to France
Edmond, and yo
much power that c

Yes, my Lord,
replied Sir Edmo
Sherridan, from
not acknowledge
you are under an
thing from Mrs. B
her interest is co
beral of them; b
istence, I am her
resentment find
her fortune, I sha
cient of my own

ill: and my word is inviolable. I will t this moment engage myself to adopt, oth in my own name, and that of my ife, Frances Sherridan as our daughter; nd if we should have any children, she ill become an equal inheritor with them, nd if not, she will be the sole heiress.

Upon my word, Sir Edmond, replied ord Sherridan, it is impossible to make more noble or generous proposal; but would not wish to take advantage of much greatness of soul, as I have arned from experience how valuable a od fortune is.—

In the name of Heaven, my Lord, interrupted Sir Edmond, recollect there is thing so precious to me, just now, as e time I am losing; that if I could but one minute sooner to Malvina, or rather, if I could take back her charge to r, there is nothing that I would not

sacrifice. Therefore, my Lord, since my proposal does not displease you, permit me to go immediately in search of a lawyer, before whom you may sign the order, which may authorise me to take Frances Sherridan out of the power of Mrs. Burton; and I will also ratify the act, by which I shall engage myself to adopt her.

Without waiting for Lord Sherridan's answer, he flew like lightening along the streets, and soon reached the house of a counsellor with whom he was acquainted, and brought him to Lord Sherridan's: who was petrified at the velocity with which Sir Edmond went and returned, saying to him, it indeed appears, Sir, that you do not wish to lose time, and you have, without doubt, as you returned with this gentleman, explained all matters which are to be regulated between us; and while he is employed in that closet,

ou will favour me with your company to another room, where you will meet person who wishes to speak with you.

Sir Edmond, much surprised, eagerly stened to know who could come to ek him at Lord Sherridan's; and on en-ring the room, he observed the same rson whom he had seen there an hour fore, and who had regarded him with much attention. Sir Edmond going him, and politely saluting him, en-ired if he had any particular busines ith him?

I wished Sir, replied the gentleman, ith a look of kindness, to speak with u, as I hope to have the satisfaction of ing serviceable to you. I have not e honour of knowing you personally, at as I abhor injustice, the conviction at you are very near experiencing it,

has very warmly interested me in y
favour—I may say, before I had
pleasure of seeing you. You have v
powerful enemies Sir, and you are, I m
no doubt, ignorant of their having
tained an order from government to s
you out of the kingdom, under the p
text of your having formed a party
Edinburgh, in favour of the French pr
ciples; and it is to be put in force
morrow; which, though I know nothi
of you, I have refused to sign, becau
among all the crimes alleged against y
I could not ascertain any proofs of su
cient consequence to sanction so arbitra
a proceeding, when chance directed
should both meet here. I was so mu
surprised at your looks, that I determin
not to leave Lord Sherridan's, witho
obtaining from him some information
garding your situation and character. I
gave it me during your absence, but y
ill pardon him for an indiscretion whi

has given me the power of being useful to you, and to warn you of your slanderers. If you will therefore go with me, I have not a doubt but you will easily vindicate yourself; and that we shall induce them to revoke an illegal order, that partiality has wrested from weakness.

Ah, gracious God! Sir, replied Sir Edmond, you have nearly petrified me by the surprise and the indignation which my enemies have inspired; and the deep sense of gratitude which I feel for your kind interest, oppresses my heart so powerfully, that I find it utterly impossible to express myself on the occasion. But by what singular barbarity am I to be condemned without being heard? And it is your disinterested generosity, then, which has withheld me, when tottering on the edge of such a precipice?—Infamous wretches! they wished then to tear

me from my Malvina? O, name them, Sir, name my detested accusers, that I may know, that I may unmask them.

The petition was signed, replied the gentleman, by Mrs. Burton and Lord Stafford: also by some other persons who hold the first rank in Edinburgh, and of the first consideration here, where it is also supported by men of very powerful interest.—

And all this, interrupted Sir Edmond, with a smile of anguish, to rend the heart, and throw the most amiable of women into despair! Oh God! is it possible there can be so much malice in the human heart?—Come Sir, let us go, that you may not repent having granted me your generous protection; a simple recital will permit you to judge whether I am innocent, and you will be informed how far interest, ambition, and revenge can lead a selfish mind.

hey departed together—and the Mar- of D*** presented Sir Edmond to King, in council with his minister; the same day this unjust and cruel er was developed and revoked.

dmond, in consideration of the dan- which he had escaped, could not ve his generous protector without ex- ssing what he felt. Sir Edmond, tak- his hand, said in a softened voice, it not only me, my Lord, whom you e saved, it is not only me who will ss you—no—it is a heart ten thousand es more affectionate, more worthy n mine, who will offer her prayers to aven for you, where they will be re- ved my Lord; for they will arise from heart where purity and virtue alone ides. Farewell my Lord, your generous erest, your benevolent interference, l your image will ever live here; (lay- his hand on his breast) and while life

remains, be eternally engraven on my heart. I am certain I shall live in your remembrance; for most assuredly the sweetest reward of goodness is to recollect the happiness it has been the author of.

They then separated, and Sir Edmond returned to Lord Sherridan's to sign the two papers which the lawyer had been drawing up, as he determined to set out without delay for Scotland. He returned to his lodgings to prepare for his departure. He had scarcely been in one moment, when a letter was delivered to him; it was from Mrs. St. Clare, and only contained these few lines: "I am at a loss to imagine from what motive you pretend to be surprised at not having received letters from Malvina, as I cannot suppose that you have forgot that you remitted them into the hands of Mrs. Fenwick; and, for which reason, my unfor-

anate friend has vowed never more to elieve you. Indeed, the turpitude of our conduct has been so far above what I ever could have supposed from you, hat my heart refuses to credit the proofs I have of it; and I cannot believe, that ou had a knowledge of the order for aking away her darling, or that detesta- le letter of Mrs. Fenwick's. But, if I lo judge you rightly, and your soul yet ossesses one spark of humanity, tremble, vhen you behold yourself surrounded by he murderers of your wife; whom, if ou wish to behold once more, delay not a moment."

While Sir Edmond was perusing this etter, he turned pale; a universal shiv- ring agitated his whole frame; and the hill of death and despair seemed to have ervaded his heart, and every vein in his ody. He silently went up to Mrs. Fen- rick's apartment; he knocked; Jenny

she shut it

By the
ceived Mrs.
longer be held
woman, who
dared to stab
His heart th
and, governe
was going to
full explanatio
observing a wri
he perceived a
he instantly

a loved him? He hid his pale, humi-
ed countenance with the fatal letter,
l became almost suffocated by his
s; while his agonised, repentant heart
ready to burst. This noise awakened
s. Fenwick; and, alarmed at seeing a
n in the room, she jumped out of bed,
l found it was Sir Edmond. What is
ou? said she; but perceiving the pa-
, which he held in his hand, she ex-
imed, Oh! God! Sir Edmond, what
e you done? I know every thing.

And I also know you, he replied, in a
e of indignation, accompanied by a
k of the utmost contempt.

Mrs. Fenwick's mind was incapable of
ling either the injuries she had been
ilty of, or the situation of Sir Edmond,
l preserved the hope of appeasing him,
l vindicating herself. She confessed
: was culpable, with an assumed humi-

lity, attributing it entirely to the excess of her love; and, half exposing her charms to Sir Edmond, she pressed him in her arms; but he repulsed her, with horror, saying, you are a vile and wicked creature. I detest you, and you are the object of my utmost contempt and abhorrence. I can never sufficiently repent, or be sufficiently humble, at the remembrance of having, for a moment, forgot myself for you. Go! wicked, despicable woman, and bow your guilty head to heaven, which is conscious of all the infamy of your conduct, and all the maliciousness of your heart.

He concluded with these words, and left her a prey to confusion and regret.

CHAP. IX.

A MOURNFUL OBJECT.

WHILE Mrs. Fenwick was afflicting herself, Sir Edmond ordered a chaise to be got ready, and departed, without stopping night or day. Sleep had never once saluted his eyes. The image of Malvina, ill-used, and dying, was for ever present to his imagination, and oppressed his mind with an insupportable weight of sorrow and repentance. He could not rest even in the carriage; for, when the mind is distres-

sed by corroding anxiety, the repose of the body becomes equally insupportable. For this reason, he frequently got out, while on the road; he ran, he reasoned with himself; but he could not reach her soon enough, and he was taken for a lunatic. Despair was stamped on his features. What avails, then, health, birth, and fortune, which all smiled upon him? Yes; all these he had in possession. But, of what importance are all the blessings which are bestowed upon us, if we are the prey of remorse?

He, however, arrived at last at the place he so impatiently desired. Perceiving the garden-wall, he stopped at the little private gate, of which he had a key; and, ordering the carriage to go round to the court-yard, he entered the wood. The full orbed moon shed her pensive silver light on every surrounding object. How were they changed, since

ast saw them! The trees had lost
: foliage. The flowers no longer
med, and lavishly scattered their
:t perfume. The melody of the birds
silent; a piercing cold had succeeded
soft breath of summer. In his way
beheld some funeral cypresses, and
my firs, whose pyramidical branches
erved the only remaining verdure that
:ared; from whose dark branches, the
sent forth her doleful shrieks; it
the only noise, which interrupted the
ice of night, and which Echo mourn-
/ repeated.

dmond shuddered; his legs trembled
er him; he struck his foot against a
e. A moon-beam, which had pierced
foliage, permitted his wandering eye
bserve that this stone covered a tomb.
uttered an exclamation, and fell
n; his body pressed the cold and
eless earth. He was uncertain who

slept under it, and the deepest sorrow penetrated his heart. In his despair, he struck his head against the stone, exclaiming, with wildness, Malvina! Malvina!

Soon after, he heard a voice soft and weak, which appeared to proceed from the shrubbery, reply, and ask, who called me?

At this accent, Edmond arose; and, wildly looking round, endeavoured to find from whence that voice, which struck him, proceeded. He listened, and presently heard the rustling of cloaths among the trees, and perceived a woman with a black veil, which covered her head, and part of her shoulders. Who are you? and whom do you seek? She asked, why do you come here, to disturb the ashes of the dead, and prevent that peace, which only the tomb can afford me?

"What is it I hear? cried Sir Edmond. What fatal words! Malvina! Is it thou, whom I behold? Is it thou, whom I hear?

No! she replied, I am no longer Malvina. I was so once, when he loved me; but he has left me, and I am fallen into distress. He has deprived me of his love; and the grief I feel for it, will soon bring me to the dust.

At these words, a mortal chill seemed to freeze the soul of Edmond, and a presentiment of the most severe misfortune penetrated his heart. He raised the veil, which covered Malvina; he pressed her in his arms. My wife, my friend, my Malvina! do you not know your Edmond? he exclaimed, in the most passionate accent.

Hush! hush! you must not pronounce

that name here. Do you not know how often I have repeated it in vain, ever since the night of my despair? but he never sent me any comfort.

Malvina! recollect me, for pity's sake. I am thy Edmond, thy husband, who is returned, never to leave you more.

Malvina seated herself upon the stone; and, surveying him with a smile of anguish, she said, why do you so often repeat, I am Edmond, I am Edmond? Do you think I am ignorant of all which has passed? They vainly wished to hide it from me; and I know that Edmond will never return here, since another has taken possession of his heart; he will only stay with her. He rejects, he hates Malvina.

He reject her! interrupted Edmond, pressing his lips to the cold cheeks of his

wife. He hate her! Ah! heaven is my witness, never, never, was she so much beloved.

He would not like to hear what you say, she replied; and you must never tell me that he loves me, hurrying from him, because that will prevent me from dying.

And is it thus, that I have found thee? exclaimed Edmond, clasping his hands in the anguish of despair. I speak to Malvina; and Malvina no longer hears me. I am before her; and her mild eyes do not behold me. Grief has destroyed her senses; and it is myself, the most barbarous and inhuman of beings, who has reduced her to this dreadful state. Oh! my Malvina, most beloved, and most injured of women! condescend to smile on thy Edmond, that thy heart may be arrested by his voice, and thy looks may dwell upon thy husband. But,

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and he s
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round; but
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approached
upon it, th
strikes, and
then, wait a
to-day; but,

Sh

l went some paces beyond the shrub-
y. The moon shone directly on her
ıntenance; and it was, by its pale
ms, that Edmond, gazing on his be-
ed wife, marked how much all her
tures were altered by the corroding
ch of sorrow, which silently preys,
l destroys the powers of life. She
sed close by him; took up her robe,
t it might not touch him, and conti-
ed her walk.

He followed her steps, slowly, without
ring the power to speak; went with
into the house, and followed her to
apartment, where Mrs. St. Clare was
ting her appearance. You behold me
here, said Malvina, on entering. It
ong, very long. I did not believe it
so difficult to die.

Mrs. St. Clare sighed deeply, got up,
l silently took the hand of her friend,

they enteeb
and he sur
melancholy
smote his br

Malvir
regard yet
round
on e he mo
apr y Edm
ur are but
s ort, and
ah! then,
despair.

Edmon

how much he suffers;
deceived; but, be
reature! Thy griefs
I have also suffered
see, that I am very tran-
there will be a day of mer-
night of repose, which will
broken-hearted, and close all
nds.

it. Clare arose, took Edmond's
d held it to Malvina's breast,
ting her friend. Do you not
thing? Look at this person,
Do you not recollect him?
you not know that it is Ed-

do you know of Edmond? asked
with a hurried accent, and an
ildness, as she surveyed them
h! if you know where he is, run
run; tell him to bring back my

Frances; tell him, particularly, not to give her to Kitty, his Kitty; because she is mine, the child of my Clara; and I must give an account of her to her mother? How shall I dare to join her in heaven, when I have lost her child? How can I support her threatening voice, when she demands her of me? Must I say, that she belonged to Kitty? Do you think, added she, pressing the hand of Sir Edmond with convulsive agitation, do you believe that Edmond would consent to let me have my Frances?

He will, to-morrow, bring her to you, himself, said Edmond. To morrow, your husband and your child will be here.

Hear him, just heaven! exclaimed Malvina, with quickness. Do you hear him? He promises, and assures me, that Edmond and Frances will be here to-morrow. But, does he not likewise deceive

e? For, is not that the same voice, ıich I formerly—Do I not hear Ed- ond? Edmond! That name is every ıere, continued she, putting her hand her forehead. It burns me, it con- mes me; my brain is on fire. Then, ring from Mrs. St. Clare and Edmond, ıe ran up to her own chamber, crying, hy, why, prevent me from going to m? I think, he would certainly have ied my sorrows. I would have said, Edmond, behold, thy Malvina has me to thee. If it displeases thee, she ll go away; but, look at her only once re, that she may take with her a last k of compassion and kindness from r Edmond. Only tell her, that you not hate her; and, from that moment, e will never more disturb your new asures. She will suppress her tears, fle her complaints, and sleep in the st. Now, that door of happiness is

became dejected, from
her agitations, and she su
the floor. Her eyes were
and her oppressed heart s
break. But her situation
was, was nothing, when
that of Edmond.

Mrs. St. Clare perceive
ing his hand, with a look
do not let us despair, said
the sight of Frances, b
conscience, may awaken
present, she will remain tr

Ah! Mrs. St. Clare, the crime was dreadful; but the punishment far exceeds it.

No, no, unhappy Edmond! replied she, I do not accuse you. It is not you, alone, who have been guilty; your sufferings sufficiently convince me of it.

Oh! no one has been so much to blame as myself, he replied. I was beloved by Malvina. Oh! Malvina, my adored wife! if, by an impious frailty, I have perjured my vows, on finding you in this terrible situation, Gracious God! am I not sufficiently punished?

CHAP. X.

CONCERNS MRS. BURTON.

MALVINA, insensible to
that passed, was carried to her chamb
without knowing it. In that state
death-like insensibility, she did not app
to distinguish any object. Edmo
seated by her bed-side, miserable a
dejected, could not help contemplati
that charming countenance, which h
constituted his felicity, and now
most severe misery, as he considered hi

self the occasion of it. He watched, he waited; he anxiously hoped for a change, but in vain. That countenance, once so expressive of tenderness and every amiable propensity, no longer varied; the play of features seemed suspended; an inanimate melancholy stupor had succeeded, and chained those features, which the gentle virtues, sense and affection, had animated.

Edmond could no longer support this heart-breaking sight; and, leaving her bed, with an air of delirium, he rushed out of the room; then, returning instantly, he went up to Mrs. St. Clare, saying, for heaven's sake, inform me, who were those barbarous monsters, that have reduced my beloved Malvina to this deplorable state.—Name them, that I may load them with my vengeance. How long has she been deprived of her rea-

son? and why was it concealed
me?

Sir Edmond, replied Mrs. St. Cla
will satisfy all your inquiries. But,
reply to mine; and dare not to
the air, which this unfortunate v
breathes, by asserting a falsehood.
at this letter, which is written by
Fenwick to Malvina; had it the san
of your approbation? and, did you
sacrifice your wife for her?

Oh heaven, what infernal wicked
exclaimed Sir Edmond, on readin
contents of Mrs. Fenwick's letter.
a monster of deceit! It is, then, th
testable hand, which sent the bl
Malvina's heart. Ah! madam, I acl
ledge, this woman did seduce me
moment. Yet, I was drawn into it
by circumstances, than by her. B
solemnly declare that, since ther

contempt with which she inspired me was so great, that I found not the least effort in resisting all her wiles. And, can you imagine, that I could be so base, as to sacrifice Malvina, the interesting Malvina, to such a vain, frivolous being as that? Merciful God! I thus permit her to insult the wife of my bosom! Ah! far, very far, be such a detestable crime from me! Never did I allow her impure lips to utter the revered name of Malvina before me. But, by what inconceivable art, by what mysterious iniquity, could she find means to secrete my letters?

That is sufficient, interrupted Mrs. St. Clare. I shall not even inquire, if you was concerned in taking away Frances. I should blush, even to suspect such a trait of inhumanity from the frail, though repentant husband of Malvina.

I never saw Lord Sherridan but the

day previous to my leaving London, replied Edmond, and it was from him that I received the information of Mrs. Burton's having sent for Frances from her retreat! and it is from him that I obtained an order the same moment, to carry her back, here it is, and to morrow Frances will be resigned to her beloved mother.

Oh, Edmond! unfortunate, unhappy Edmond! exclaimed Mrs. St. Clare, pressing both his hands in hers, why, are not those detestable wretches to be responsible for having so basely slandered you?—As to Mrs. Burton, I hope the earth does not contain another being so deceitful and unfeeling. She came here, Edmond, a few days after Williams had brought your letter, attended by one of the justices of the peace, and alighting from her carriage, she desired him to summon Lady Burton to appear. I went with your wife, and informed him there

was no person here of that name. This is no time to deny it, said Mrs. Burton, here is a copy of the church register where the celebration took place, which states the facts. I am informed of every thing, but what perhaps the lady is unacquainted with, addressing herself to Malvina; which is, that Sir Edmond is fascinated with another beauty, and recollecting the extent of his imprudence, now desires to dissolve his union, which he only regards as a misfortune, and which he declares he never should have been drawn into, but by the most seducing artifices. Here, madam, is the act that I am commissioned to present you from him: if you consent to sign it, your marriage will be dissolved, and Miss Sherridan may remain with you; but if you refuse, it is her father's will that she must be resigned to my care; for which there is a legal order, which these persons will see duly performed immediately.

Madam, replied your wife, with more fortitude and calmness than I could have expected, I do not perceive that this order is signed by Sir Edmond; I shall therefore wait till that is affixed, before I sign mine. I will certainly yield to his wishes, but will not consent without he does also.

So, replied Mrs. Burton, with a satirical smile, because you wish a marriage, which your husband detests, to continue in force a few days longer, you will deviate from the vows of a friend, which you pretend was so dear to you, and consent to allow her child to be separated from you.

No, madam, that is what I never will consent to, replied Malvina, with energy: and if she is ravished from me, it will be indeed by force only. I shall then put in a claim against this attempt, for if she is taken by violence, justice will resign

her to me again; you must not always expect to accomplish your views by such conduct. The day of truth may not be far distant, when the world will know your heart, and be shocked at its selfishness.

Mrs. Burton appeared rather mentally disturbed at the solemnity with which Malvina spoke, and without answering her, turned to the justice. You observe, she said, that the lady refuses to comply with any terms; therefore the law authorises me to see those orders put in force, which I am empowered to have fulfilled. Therefore I demand the appearance of the Honorable Frances Sherridan.

I then spoke.—Sir, I desire you will take particular care that you are not guilty of a very despicable piece of business. I am equally as great a stranger

as yourself to all this affair; but I fores
that you will one day repent having e
ployed force in taking Miss Sherri
from this place.

Mrs. St. Clare, interrupted Mrs. B
ton, in a tone of contempt, we have
thing to do with your high-flown se
ments; keep them for the public
may have the patience to hear th
Come Sir, there is no time to lose, an
summon you to perform your duty.

Indeed, said the justice, I do not
what I shall have to fear; the order wh
Mrs. Burton has, is positive and comp
in all the forms which are legal in
opinion of justice. I then only exec
the laws. He then went out to o
Miss Sherridan's appearance. Not
of the servants dare to disobey him,
you know how much the magistrates
respected here.

Malvina, who saw with terror, that she had not a moment to lose, made another effort, and addressing Mrs. Burton, may I not be permitted, at least to keep Frances, until Sir Edmond has signed the act you have shewn me? I will then engage myself, by the most sacred vows, to complete the dissolution of my marriage, or relinquish my charge.

No, said Mrs. Burton, I will not accept of any other accommodation, than what was proposed on my arrival; and I desire that you will quickly perform it. I must have your signature or your child.

Oh, Clara! exclaimed Malvina, raising her hands to Heaven, thou beholdest to what a cruel alternative I am reduced by the malevolence of this woman—direct me in my duty dear sacred Shade.

Mrs. Burton may go as soon as she

pleases, said Mrs. Tasse, entering the room, for the child is already in the carriage.

Ah! they have taken my child, then, exclaimed Malvina, wildly, flying out of the room.

Mamma, mamma, said the child, struggling to release herself from those who had taken her, are you not going with me?

No, I will never leave you, said Malvina, throwing herself under the coach wheels, the barbarians may crush me before they shall take thee from thy mother.

Take away the lady, said Mrs. Burton, in the most unfeeling manner, to the people who were with her; you see plainly she is bereft of her senses.

What then, madam, said I, are you invulnerable to the sensation of pity? What can you expect from such inhuman conduct? If your intention is not to kill the innocent creature, whom you have thus cruelly taken from her more than mother, with such unfeeling apathy, are you sure that you will not be obliged to return her?

Take away the lady, repeated Mrs. Burton, in a voice trembling with rage, without deigning to answer me.

Malvina, perceiving they were going to carry her away by force, arose, and falling at Mrs. Burton's feet, said, in the name of Heaven, in the name of humanity, for the sake of your own peace, do not deprive me of my child! I cannot survive the loss of her. Do you wish to reproach yourself with my death?

It is in your own power to return her, said Mrs. Burton, perfectly unaffected; you know the conditions, I am inflexible to any others.

Go then, depart, I shall not detain you longer, said your wife, leaving her with horror. Though I have not a doubt but that this act is a horrible piece of art, by which you hope to deceive both myself and Edmond, by disuniting us for ever. But Sir Edmond will soon appear, perhaps he may be here to-morrow, perhaps to-day. He will return me my child, and your arts will be revealed. You will be punished; indeed you must be already, if you possess any conscience which can force you to feel. There is justice however in Heaven! On concluding these words, your Malvina, overpowered by grief, was nearly deprived of all sense; and Mrs. Burton, whose countenance betrayed a mixture of anger and

fear, hurried away. What shall I say more? I have only to inform you, Sir Edmond, on the same evening of that dreadful day, the letter which you now hold, was brought to Malvina. She believed that she beheld in it a confirmation of all that Mrs. Burton had said; and she was forced to suppose that her husband was concerned with her enemies. That perhaps she had sacrificed the child of her beloved Clara, to a man who possessed neither faith nor honor. From that moment—

From that moment, repeated Edmond, trembling.

Mrs. St. Clare pointed to Malvina, without having the power to utter another word.

I understand you, said he, with a look of the deepest despair; and if I lose her

before she has recovered her reason, she will die with the idea that I was the cause of her being thus hurried to the grave.

This fear, which was but too well founded, had something so frightful in the very idea of it, that Mrs. St. Clare was fearful that it might tempt him to destroy himself; and she therefore, with the utmost kindness, endeavoured to prevent his mind from dwelling upon this mournful subject, by relating a thousand interesting particulars relative to Malvina, which drew torrents of tears from Sir Edmond, and in some measure relieved his oppressed heart. Your wife particularly wished me to have a tomb-stone placed in the wood, where you met her this evening. I opposed it for some time, but finding that contradiction only served to render the desire more strong, I was determined to gratify her every wish. She appears to have her mind possessed by the

singular idea that she ought to die every night at ten o'clock, the fatal hour on which she received Mrs. Fenwick's letter. It is at that time that she always goes out, in that state of insensibility which you have witnessed. Without seeming to know me, she calls me by my name sometimes to accompany her; she then goes into the garden, and desires me to leave her alone till midnight. She then returns so melancholy, and tells me she shall not die till the next day, and falls into that cold insensibility. I have had several physicians; but they gave me not the least hope; they should have been here again to-day.

Edmond did not give her time to finish what she was saying; but, starting up, went to Malvina's bed-side; and, falling on his knees, he pressed her pale hand to his lips, crying, sweet, sacred victim, thou shalt be avenged. The

I will go, and snat
those detested hands
her. I depart, Mal
the next evening. T
thee! added he, in a
as if imploring, Oh
thee recovered! Tel
na, my companion,
Only one word, or
Frightful silence! O
come of my Malvina?
entreat in vain. Her
ver silent to the en
mond. But, now, t
has not any thing

canst no longer love me, that this wretched being may have the felicity of hearing that soft voice. Ah! how infinitely would he prefer thy reproaches, the most severe thou couldst utter, to this dreadful inanimation! from which nothing can rescue thee.

He then quitted her hand, which fell without strength. He left her; yet, her eyes could not follow him. He contemplated her with dismay, oppressed as he was with fear, and his own condemnation. He withdrew to another part of the chamber, and resigned himself to the violent grief, which despair and repentance equally produced in his heart.

During this plaintive sorrow, Malvina seemed as awakened from her gloomy stupor. She looked wildly round her. She listened, and a transient bloom crossed her cheeks. Edmond beheld this emo-

tion, and approached her. She took l
hand, and, leaning forward, said, in
low voice, have you heard any thing?

It is him. He is returned. He wee
because he cannot find me again.

You know it is him, then, Malvin

Certainly. His voice pierced me
the shades of death; for there was
other but his, that would have touc
me like his. But, do not tell any one
he is here; they must not know of it,
cause the stranger will come, and
him away again. She will force Mal
away. It is you only, who do not
to leave him. Come, and sit down.
a moment after, she cried, No, No!
apparent terror, I cannot. Do you
see that hand of iron, which detains
Oh! It is Clara's. Observe, what an
penetrable bar there is, which separ

her from me? It is she, who has placed it there. Do you not hear her voice, which is no longer affectionate and soft, as it used to be, but terrible and threatening? It is she, who continually repeats, that the perfidy of Edmond is a just reward for my deviation from my promise. Ah! it is she, who has torn me from his heart, and placed another there. She smiles at my distress; and, though I am humbled to the dust, and implore her forgiveness, she will not condescend to look at me.

Oh! thou much injured angel! exclaimed Sir Edmond, weeping, how much ought you to despise those, who have made you suffer thus?

Me hate him! said she, with quickness. I see, very plain, that you do not know me, or you would be sure that was impossible. Hear me, said she in a whisper.

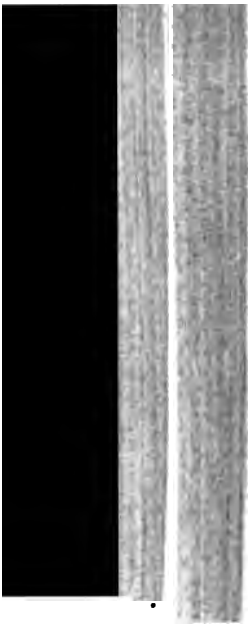
If you should ever meet with him, be sure to conceal from him, that he was the cause of my death; for, perhaps, it might afflict him; and I wish, that my Edmond should always be happy, though he may have forgot his poor Malvina. But I am going to my father, who is above, and I shall implore him to bless Edmond. Oh! Almighty Father, I will say, do not punish him; but, if he has provoked thy anger against him, O! let me suffer, instead of him, and bestow on him all the felicity thou shouldst have granted me.

Oh! thou angelic woman! holy innocence! exclaimed Sir Edmond; and is it thou, who was to meet with one, who was so great a monster as to deceive thee?

But, do you think, continued she, that Clara will permit me to raise my voice to my heavenly father? She is

with his angels; and, my Clara deserves to be one. But, when she perceives me before the divine tribunal, she will ask me, what I have done with her child; and, if I approach her, she will repulse me with horror, demanding her Frances.

At this dreadful idea, Malvina's strength again failed; her eyes rolled; and, clasping her hands, she fell senseless on the bed, and again enjoyed some moments of the sweet silent peace of the grave.



CHAP.

A FAINT GLIMMER

I MUST n
said Edmond to Mrs.
must be fetched back
go, continued he; an
hope crosses my heart,
on the presence of th
pears to me, that the i

given a fault in another, though she cannot support the idea of having reason to reproach herself; and, from the moment in which she imagined herself culpable, she sunk under it, as her soul is too pure to wish to exist, when touched by remorse.

As soon as the dawn of day appeared, Sir Edmond got into his carriage; and, before noon, he reached Mrs. Burton's. The sight of that detested house made him shudder. He went in, and entered the room, without being announced. He found his aunt at breakfast, surrounded by a brilliant circle. On beholding Edmond, pale, with his hair dishevelled, equipped in a riding-dress, she uttered an exclamation of surprise. Little Frances, who was mournfully sitting by her, started from her seat, and flew with rapture to Sir Edmond. My dear Sir, said she,

you have been away so long; but,
you will take me back. I know yo
take me to my dear mama. Won't y

Yes, yes, replied Sir Edmond, pre
her with ardour to his bosom; thi
ning, you shall behold your dear mo

And by what right, Edmond, a
Mrs. Burton, pale with rage, do you
tend to take away a charge, which
confided to my care?

From the right of justice and hun
ty, replied he, surveying her with
tempt. It was by that you was ent
ed, when your perfidious wickedness
vished that child from my wife.

At this appellation to Malvina, and
cruelty which he seemed to accuse
Burton with, all the company appe
embarrassed, looking at each each o

with an expression of inquiry, as wishing to gain information from each, to develope this extraordinary scene. Mrs. Burton, alarmed at having so many witnesses, fearing the reproaches which she was conscious Sir Edmond might load her with, spoke in a more gentle tone, saying to him, if you wish to speak to me upon business, I will attend you to my closet, where we can explain ourselves better.

No, no, said Edmond, with a mixture of rage and detestation, I have nothing to say privately; and I only regret, that the whole world is not present also, that I might have the sweet satisfaction of exhibiting you in your native character. The barbarous woman, who could so unfeelingly resist the pathetic entreaties of the most gentle of beings; and who could, by insult, deceit, and malice,

destroy the reason of one of the most pe
fect of nature's works. Stop, continu
lie, observing her intention of interrupti
him. I have not yet mentioned the sca
dalous insinuations, which you ha
written, to satisfy the horrid desire
revenge and ambition; and, without t
least scruple, or compunction, has pu
licly accused her own nephew, as a pe
son who ought to be suspected, and w
is disaffected towards the English gover
ment; and the measures of this wom
were so well conceived and planned, th
had it not been for the almost immedia
I must call it interposition of Providen
I should have been sent to the Indies,
a disturber of the public tranquillity.
perceive, by your consternation, t
you hoped they would have conceal
your secret; and, without doubt, yo
vile accomplice, who sits near you, Lo
[illegible]afford, believed so also. But there
liberal and loyal minds; and, ha

pily for humanity, there are not many that resemble yours.

Sir Edmond had begun with so much energy and vehemence, that it was utterly impossible to stop him; and, now, it was too late; every thing was discovered. Mrs. Burton, completely humbled, observed every one tremble at this recital, and leave her with horror. Her reputation for possessing such greatness of soul, which she had raised with such infinite pains and care, was demolished in one moment; and her punishment had already commenced.

Edmond perceived it, and his vengeance was gratified. He then only thought of his departure; and taking Frances in his arms, he placed her in the carriage, and drove to Doctor Maxwell's, to prevail on him to attend Malvina. He complied, and they instantly set out; and

Edmond employed all the time in discoursing on the state Malvina was reduced to. The horses nearly flew; and the clock, that faithful monitor, was just striking ten, when the carriage stopped at the door. Mrs. St. Clare hastened to it; she had been impatiently expecting Edmond. How is she? How has she been? demanded he, with a hurried voice.

This is the hour that she goes into the garden, replied she. She is now there.

Her state, her health? interrupted he, alarmed.

Mrs. St. Clare shook her head, and, sighing, replied, she is just the same.

I will go to her, said Edmond. I hope, no danger can proceed from it.

Alas! returned Mrs. St. Clare, what do you think there is yet to fear?

The wretched Edmond but too well understood it; and he felt it to despair, that, of all the situations, the most terrible is that, where the extreme of one evil can only permit us to dread a worse. In this disposition, he went into the garden. He took the same walk which he had done the preceding evening, when he followed Malvina's steps; and he was oppressed by the same misery, the same agonising sensations. He perceived her near a cypress-tree; she was walking; her long white robe, her hair wildly rioting, her slow pace, and her eyes bent on the ground. All that appertained to her, partook of a death-like melancholy, and increased the manifest pity which her situation inspired. The sound of Edmond's foot-steps appeared to alarm her, and she seemed as

if inclined to fly. Do not be fearful, said Edmond; it is only me.

Is it you, replied she, with quickness, going towards him, that she might see him plainer. O! yes, it is you. I recollect, that you said you would come back again, and you have not then deceived me?

O! never, never, will I deceive my dear Malvina.

Ah! listen to me, said she, after a moment's silence (in which she seemed buried in thought), I fancied you had been here before. But, oh! how long, how very long it is since then! So long, and yet I live. Here, every thing was so beautiful, added she, extending her hand towards the garden. There, I have gathered roses; they were for him. Here I have listened to the birds; they sung for him. Every where the air I breathed was so

pure, so like its native heaven, that, also all, every thing was for him. But he flew from me, and every thing is withered. The flowers are all decayed, and fallen; and the place where they grew, is forgotten.

But he will return again, replied Edmond, pressing her gently to his bosom; and then you may gather roses for him, again; the birds will again sing, and the air will again be soft and refreshing.

No, no, interrupted she, with a convulsive tremor, No, No!—never, never. Do you see this flower, which is at my bosom? I gave it him the evening before his departure; but he let it drop, when he left me. I snatched it from the ground, and, ever since, I have worn it next my heart. Yet, with all my care, it would die. Certainly, it is, because

he has rejected me. Only see how it has lost its bloom, and its freshness, which it never, never will regain. Yet, we must all die one day. As for me, I have scarcely a moment to live.

My gentle, my tender Malvina must not die. I will press her in my arms. I will save her from death,

No, no; we must submit to our fate; and mine, is to obey him. He does not wish for Malvina. He forces her to her grave, and she must fall into it. Ought I not to die to-morrow?—Yes, to-morrow, when the clock tells that hour which brought the stranger's letter. Oh! it had something in it, which destroys, which kills by moments, continued she, looking steadily at Sir Edmond, with a look of deep and settled despair. It contained something which burns, which devours here, and there (pointing to her

head, and laying her hand on her heart). It is a fire, which seems for ever burning; an evil, which cannot be appeased. It constantly gnaws at the heart, and prevents me from living; and, yet, it will not allow me to die quick enough. Have you seen those who suffer, and no longer exist? They must have resembled me.

She stopped; the dreadful picture of her sufferings had weakened all her faculties, and she sunk, without strength, into the arms of her husband; who, pressing the inanimate body to his bosom, riveted his lips to those, which were once so blooming; but, now, how cold! how pale! and those eyes, which formerly beamed with tenderness and love, are now almost extinguished; her whole form was cold as death. He called Malvina, his dear Malvina; but Malvina did not reply. He felt solitary and alone in the

world, with his wife expiring; and he
beyond all expression wretched, as
considered himself the cause of
death. He no longer thought of retu
ing; he saw, he thought only of his
loved Malvina, whom he believed dyi
and he determined not to survive her.

Mrs. St. Clare being extremely une
at his staying so late, went into the g
den, followed by Doctor Maxwell. Th
found him on his knees, supporting hi
self against a tree, with Malvina fold
in his arms; anxious and fearfully cou
ing the weak throbbing of her heart.

On observing the Doctor advancin
he called to him without changing
posture. Doctor, this is my wife, t
is my Malvina—you must save her—y
must! Oh, pray answer me? Do n
tell me that she cannot live—I cann
will not support it. I cannot support t

idea of losing my all of happiness, my Malvina! Do you hear me Doctor? do you Mrs. St. Clare? Oh! I cannot lose her. He then shed a few of those corroding tears, which are sometimes granted, though sparingly to relieve us from despair.

The Doctor having felt Malvina's arm, desired she might be taken into the house, telling Sir Edmond, that his keeping her in the cold was very injurious.

It was not with such neglect as this that you was once attended and preserved. Edmond was silent. He raised Malvina, and carried her in his arms to her bed; and the Doctor following, examined her more attentively. After a moment's pause, the disorder is worst in the head, said he. Ah! Doctor, replied Sir Edmond, tell me, may she not be saved?

Saved! he repeat
with a significant
life which you me
sent appear to be
if nothing particu
her weakness, I t
her.

Oh! Doctor, bu
for her life?

We must wait v
first see, and not p
They are now pre
see what effect th
morrow we must
The most gentle
time and patienc
recover.

You have know
rupted Sir Edmon
dear Doctor, you

give me back my Malvina? And in the tumult of his joy he clasp't his hands, he went out, then returned, issued a thousand orders at once, and as if he thought they would not be executed as quick as he wished them, he went to assist himself in their execution. He desired every one to be quick; then shook hands with all those he met, without distinction of persons. She may be saved, he exclaimed to all those who came near him. She may be recovered, the Doctor hopes, and assures me of it. Ah! my friends, assist me in recovering, in saving Malvina. She is my felicity, my life, my joy! I cannot exist without her; but who indeed here could survive her loss? Is it not from her that all your pleasures arise? That generous and compassionate mind was ever the friend of all the unhappy. Never did she permit her own sorrows to render her forgetful of others; and suppressing her own, did she not constantly

derive consolation, if she could only
lieve another's misery. And it is I, I
barian as I am, that have reduced he
this situation! And what have I gain
When for that love which was beyond
price, my vicious ingratitude has destro
her peace, and caused her reason to w
der. Every one must view me, as I
myself, and consider me as the m
guilty of men. So unworthy as I am
forgiveness, yet if my angelic Malv
should regain her reason, I may h
for pardon, as I have not a doubt of
mercy; and you will then witness t
her gentle nature is more ready to f
give, than I can be to ask it. Oh! M
vina, while there remains so much go
for you to perform on earth, thy all-
fectionate heart will not wish to lea
me before I have expiated the remo
which overwhelms my guilty mind.

Every person wept as they heard hi

mournfully accusing himself. The good Tomkins, who had nourished Malvina with her milk, and Old Peter, who had abandoned his friends and native land to follow her, expressed the deep source of their grief by that silence, which the heart of sensibility will term eloquence; for it will understand its full force, though expressed by the humble children of nature.

. . . . . .

Mrs. St. Clare, the kind, the affectionate, the disinterested Mrs. St. Clare, who was astonished to meet with one woman, in whom every virtue was united, loved her, tenderly loved her, even more than she admired her. The Doctor also remembered the affecting situation in which he first beheld her, and this rendered her present situation still more touching. Indeed, all those who had ever known her, joined their tears with Edmond's. These eloquent tears declared her intrinsic worth; and never was

there a more sincere and pathetic pan
gyric, or more powerful oration, su
rounded by all the pomp of a throne,
the applauses of the multitude. N
could any being on earth be more elevat
than she was in this secluded retreat,
the unanimous tears and benedictio
which exalted the simple Malvina. O
virtue and piety, such is thy power; a
though pride may endeavour, by eve
means, to elevate itself above mortalit
yet thy superior endowments will rise
the highest, the most exalted state. A
beneath thy immortal ray, its faint gli
mering will be extinguished; and af
having sparkled a moment, it will
away, while both it and its superb mo
ments will be buried in the dust. I
virtue and piety, pure and eternal as t
Being who created them, will exist
ever in the highest Heaven.

CHAP XII.

THE EFFECT OF MUSIC.

THE next evening at the usual hour Malvina was preparing to go into the garden: the doctor desired they would try the effect of some soft music in her presence. Mrs. St. Clare just touched a prelude on her organ. Malvina shuddered and turned her head; she then appeared to listen with attention. The melody ceased; she then fell into her usual reverie, and went forward.

I could wish any one to sing an
which she was particularly partial
said Doctor Maxwell.

Edmond advanced.

It must not be you, just yet, co
nued he. She must not hear your vo
until she is in a state to recollect it.
me first present Frances to her. We n
not exhaust all our resources. If we h
to succeed, we must be sparing of th

While they were speaking, Mrs.
Clare took her harp; and, conceal
herself behind the window-curt
touched some of the chords. Their
bration arrested Malvina a second ti
Mrs. St. Clare, on perceiving it, co
nued it; and, after playing some sl
plaintive melodies, she sung some wo
which Malvina had composed a few d
previous to Mrs. Burton's arrival.

ll the time Mrs. St. Clare was sing-
, Malvina's attention was entirely ar-
ed by it. She only looked round, to
erve from whence the voice proceed-

When it passed, she appeared to be
sidering; and, after a little time, she
l, with an air of surprise, that was not
; raising her hand to her forehead, as
o recollect herself; and they observed
efforts she made, to recal her tran-
nt and fleeting memory.

Edmond, in silence, with his eyes
ed upon her, followed all her motions;
iting, with painful anxiety, to gain
e ray of hope, which might forward
point in view, and bring relief to his
pressed heart. Yet, Malvina seemed
r occupied by his idea. She walked a
v paces, with her eyes bent on the
ound, apparently in reflection, when
e suddenly interrupted the silence
ich reigned, by saying, that certainly

was not me. And why was it not me? And then, as if affected by some new idea, she raised her voice, and began to sing the same air which Mrs. St. Clare had just ended.—Ah! Why do I say the same? I was no longer so.

Her expression had something in it so very touching and plaintive, that they could not refrain from tears. Yet, at the same time, her accent was so soft and tender, that it penetrated the very soul. It drew the attention of every person in in the house. They all ran, to listen to her, surprised, and enchanted; and, little Frances, availing herself of this opportunity, escaped from her chamber; and, proceeding on tip-toe to the place where she heard the sounds, and knowing them to be Malvina's, she rushed into the room; and, falling at her feet, she cried, mama, my dear, dear mama, have I found you at last?

At this voice, Malvina trembled, and shrieked. Then, snatching the child in her arms, and contemplating her for some time with a mixture of surprise and joy, she at last exclaimed, the barbarians have not then killed thee, my cherub. Yes! it is thou. Yes! I do know thee. The sweet child of my Clara yet lives. Ah! continued she, pressing her to her bosom, I can now breathe at my ease. I can now die in peace. I can meet Clara, and she will not ask me for you any more in an angry voice, saying, what have you done with my child?

Frances kissed her; and, clasping her arms round her, O! mama, said she, why are you so pale? Why do you look at me so? Is it, because you are angry with me? or, do you no longer love your little Frances? Oh! mama, dear mama, why do you not kiss me as you used to do?

As I used to do! interrupted Malvina. Every body can recollect what they used to do; it is only I, who cannot think of it. There is something here (pointing to her forehead), which obscures, which hides it.

Mama, why do you speak by yourself? What is the matter? Do you know that those wicked people, who carried me away, told me that you wished them to do it? and, that you no longer cared for me? But I would not believe them, mama. I told them, that they were very wicked, and great story-tellers, who wished to kill us both. But, my dear mama, why do you not speak to me? O! my gracious! If it should be true, that you no longer love me!

On uttering this, the affectionate heart of Frances was almost suffocated, and she burst into tears.

Though Doctor Maxwell was uneasy at Frances so abruptly appearing without his order, as he was conscious Malvina was too weak to support any long or painful emotions, yet he determined to take that opportunity of making a few attempts; and, going to Malvina, he said, you used to be so good once, that you never afflicted any one. But, now, you make your child, the child of your Clara, cry.

I do not wish to give pain to any one, said Malvina, looking at him with surprise. I am sure, I do not wish to make the dear child of my Clara cry. But, what can I do for her, now? You perceive, that I cannot any longer think. I do not know any thing. They have destroyed them all.

Since you have been thus, do you re-

member who was the cause of this great evil? said the doctor.

Oh! it is so very long a time, such a great while ago, she replied (pointing behind her). I was so happy, enjoying my life in peace, when I was met by a man my strength decayed; and, ever since I have been leaning on the grave.

At these words, Edmond advanced a step; but a look from the doctor made him keep his station; and he continued with the hope of recalling Malvina's reason, too soon forgeting that her health was not in a state to support it. Where are you going? said he, seeing her intention of proceeding to the garden.

To die, she answered. You know very well, this is the hour.

You deceive yourself. On the contra-

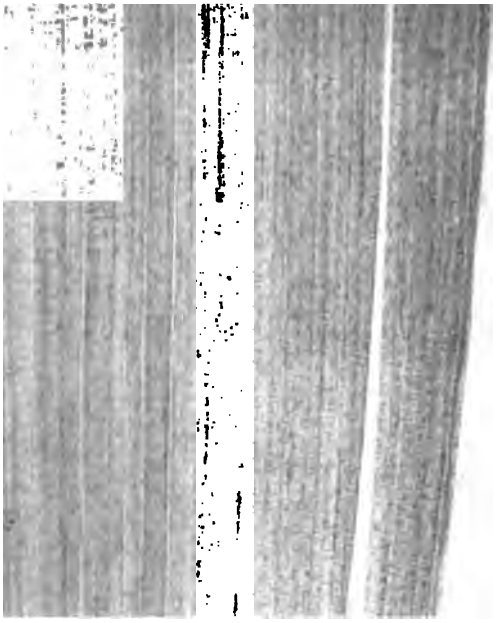
ry, this is the day on which he is to return. You will find him there.

He returned! Shall I find him there? replied she, trembling.

Yes! there is no longer a tomb there; you ought not to wish to die, since you are going to see him. The wicked persons have brought back both your child and your husband. Both are now returned to you; here is Frances with you, and Edmond is in the garden, near the tomb, where he expects you.

Expects me! Edmond expects me! she exclaimed, clasping her hands. Do not deceive me; for that would only increase the evil.

I do not deceive you. Go, and con-



ver fin

Edm
tion, v
Mrs. St
the ger
doctor's
den. S
shall alw
wish Ed
he was
brought

I can p
heart ret

as an empty sound. But, you have still that sensation, which allowed you to remember, that your lover was ill, and near dying, and that I had saved him.

Yes! yes! interrupted she, speaking to herself; he has reason to think so. Once, Edmond was near death. I wept by the side of his bed. But, when Doctor Maxwell came, I was comforted. He soothed me, and bade me dry my tears; and I wept no more. How was it possible, I could cease to remember all that? But you, continued she, surveying the doctor, how did you know it?

Doctor Maxwell, who the moment before had flattered himself that she had recollected him, though it was only a faint glimmering of reason, the pain he experienced in being disappointed in this pleasing hope, discouraged him extreme-

ly. You do not then know me? said h
mournfully.

Me! No! How should I know yo
You know, very well, that, since Cl
ra's death, and Edmond's leaving me,
have never known any thing but sorro

At this instant, her attention was
rested by the distant sound of a flu
and her pale cheeks were instantly ting
with a brilliant and burning bloom. H
heart throbbed with such violence, th
it was perceived through her robe; h
limbs trembled, and her agitation was
great, that it was with the utmost dif
culty she supported herself.

The doctor was rather alarmed, and b
gan to repent of having called up t
many contending emotions at once. Bu
there was no recalling what was done
Do you not hear, said Malvina, in a lo

and tremulous voice, that delightful harmony? It is Edmond, who plays it. It flows from the same instrument that he used, when I beheld him for the first time. Oh! I beg that you will not speak, said she, observing the doctor was going to answer. Do not, I entreat you, permit any thing to interrupt, or mix with those harmonious sounds. If you were but sensible of what infinite service they are to me, how much they refresh my nerves, calm my mind, and soften my heart!

In speaking, she went forward, till she gained the entrance of the shrubbery. Then, suddenly stopping, she said, I dare not enter it. No! I dare not enter it. If I go in there, I shall not find him; for it was the celestial spirit, which Clara has sent to fetch me to her; and that waits for me at my grave. Oh! Clara, I much wish to be with you. But,

sweeter,

While
agitation
trembled
ed, that sl
she heard.
her very
tures attai
appeared
seemed cha
tinent penet
the entrance

meridian in the wide ethereal vault, and enlightened every object with her soft and pensive rays. Edmond had ceased his song. Malvina advanced one step towards the wood. Edmond came forward. She saw, and knew him, exclaiming, as she threw herself into his arms, Oh! it is him! It is my Edmond! My eyes have not deceived me, and my Edmond is returned! Blessed, for ever blessed, be thou, adored being! Thou hast then returned to thy poor Malvina! Ah! do not leave her again! never leave her! And, now, let me press thee to my heart; for its last throb will be thine.

She then seemed suddenly to lose her strength; her voice faultered; and she sunk, from the arms of Edmond, without sense or motion.

CHAP. XIII.

INNOCENCE AT LAST FINDS PEA

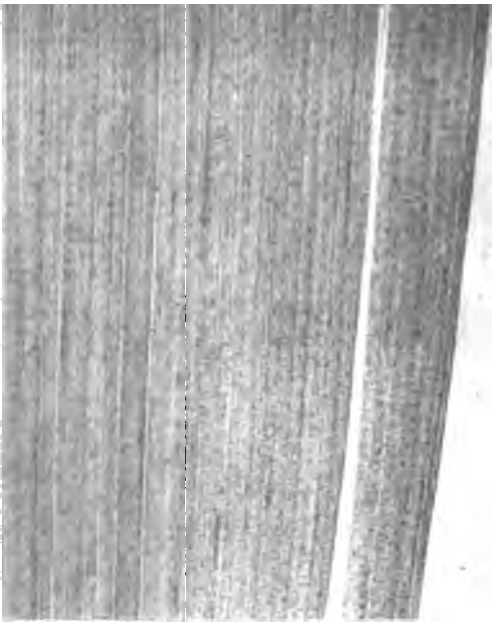
MALVINA! exclaimed
mond, terrified. My beloved Malvi
Ah! was I only to behold thy return
reason, and then to lose thee so quicl

Do not be alarmed, said the doct
oppressed by an anxiety, which he vai
endeavoured to hide; after such viole
shocks, nature requires some repose.
may, perhaps, be only a drowsy fit.

Malvina being taken into the house, was put to bed: and her repose seemed deep and tranquil.

Edmond, who was much distressed by the doctor's visible anxiety, attempted to read in his eyes if this lethargy was a favourable symptom. But he avoided his looks, and when questioned, evaded giving a determinate answer; only desiring that she might be kept as quiet as possible. The doctor seated himself by the bed side, frequently feeling her pulse, and waiting in a tormenting state of suspense, the moment when her lucid orbs, by unclosing, should relieve it. She continued in the same situation during that night, and great part of the following day.

Towards the close of it, Edmond having left the room for a moment, the doctor, turning to Mrs. St. Clare, said, the crisis is approaching, this is about the



fear-

Ed
tor fr

Mr
she he
appear

Edm
saying,
when I
he muc
not conc

Oh! my friend, he exclaimed, turning pale, explain yourself; for this silence is more dreadful than all I can know.

Do not speak quite so loud, interrupted the doctor, in order to prevent Mrs. St. Clare's distress by answering. The least noise may awaken our patient from a repose which is so necessary for her; you had better seat yourself behind the curtains, for should she awake suddenly, it might prove of the most dangerous consequence if she saw you.

Edmond obeyed; and each kept the most profound and mournful silence, listening to Malvina's respiration, which became quicker every instant.

In a little time after, her countenance was tinged with a bloom of warmth, she began to move, and articulated some words in a low voice.

The doctor believing Sir Edmond was behind the curtains, and that he could not perceive him, turned towards Mrs. St. Clare, and whispered all is over, the fever is commenced.

Oh, God! all is lost, repeated Edmond with terror, who was in too much anxiety not to watch all the doctor's words and actions.

At this exclamation, which sorrow had involuntarily excited, Malvina awakened, and starting, what was it that I heard? said she, whose voice was that? I thought it was like Edmond's, but no: if it had, he would have answered me.

At this tender reproach, neither the signs which the doctor made, or the danger of a sudden emotion, could deter the violence of Edmond's feelings, from forcing him involuntary to rush to the bed

side; and falling on his knees, he seized the pale hand which hung nearly lifeless, which he bathed with a deluge of tears, without the power of uttering a sentence.

At this sight, Malvina seemed to collect all her strength, and raising herself up in her bed, she clasped both his hands in her's, and pressing them gently, it is him, said she, it is him indeed! I behold him! He still loves me! Heaven, always merciful, would not let me die in despair.

If I love you yet? replied he, with energy. Ah! do not, do not for a moment think I have ever ceased to love you. I cannot support such a dreadful insinuation. O thou most beloved of women, who hath ever been the object of my idolatry. Thy pure image has ever reigned alone in my heart, and no other could for a moment ever have disputed thy love there. Oh Malvina! I conjure

you not to sully your lips with that horred name. If you did but know h greatly we have both been deceiv Mrs. St. Clare will inform you of it, w your strength will permit you to hear recital.

I have no occasion to be acquain with it, Mrs. St. Clare, I have beh his tears, and they tell me every thi Oh! Edmond, said she, falling back up her pillow, lay your hand upon my hea and recal it to life, that I may not l thee yet; for I feel that it wishes to f sake me.

It will be better if you would retir Sir Edmond, said the doctor, serious alarmed; I beg that you will: a long conversation may entirely exhaust h strength.

Oh! doctor, said Malvina, in a weal

and scarcely audible voice, feebly extending her hand to her husband, do not send him away. I have so little time to stay: if he goes out, I shall never see him again.

The doctor acquiesced in her wish, for it was impossible to do otherwise, when it was to soothe and sweeten the last moments of a life, which it was not in his power to prolong.

Edmond in despair, on hearing what Malvina had uttered, no longer wept, and to think was madness. He continued upon his knees, with his lips rivetted to the almost inanimate hand of his wife: while Mrs. St. Clare supported her on the other side in bed, with her heart tortured and agonised, and her eyes bathed in tears.

After a short pause, Malvina looking

at her friend with the utmost tender
said, my dear Mrs. St. Clare, is it
that my Frances is returned? If I
not been deceived by a dream, I thi
have seen her. Let her come to
that I may embrace her once more, be
I go to meet her mother.

Mrs. St. Clare went for her. She fo
her fast asleep in her little bed. I
unfortunate child, said she, thy mo
is dying, and thou art asleep. Mrs.
Clare was struck with the contrast of
sweet tranquil repose, to the heart rend
scene she had just left. However
took her up, and dressing her half asl
she carried her to her mother, and
her on Malvina's bed.

She contemplated her for some ti
and appeared greatly affected; then raisi
her hands towards her, she said, p
child, dear innocent creature, what

peaceful sleep! It was thus that thou slept, when thy mother was taken from us. Oh! may heaven grant, that every evil may pass as lightly, without thy being sensible of it! Thou sleepest, Frances. I also, shall soon sleep. But, before I do, receive my sincere regret, that I have not lived for thy sake; and my fervent repentance, for having a moment forgot thee; my most affectionate love and blessing, and my last adieu. My Edmond! I leave her to thee as a legacy. Thou wilt be watchful of her happiness. We shall both be on high; and that God, whom we shall both know, will bless you for all the attention which you may bestow upon her. Her education I will confide to the care of my dear Mrs. St. Clare. It was to have been the amusement of my life; and it would have been a delightful one to me. I have, therefore, nothing more precious to bequeath to you, for all the kind, affectionate at-

tentions I have invariably received from you. If Mr. Prior will unite in this with you, it will gratify me much. I know, that he will grieve for me. But, if the hope of being serviceable to Frances is not sufficient to reconcile him to my loss, when I am no more; tell him, that I most affectionately remembered him, when dying. Will my beloved Mrs. St. Clare also be particularly careful to teach my Frances never to sacrifice duty to love? You, who have so faithfully performed yours, in so singular an instance, will easily guide her in the road of virtue.

Ah! Malvina, what hast thou said? exclaimed Edmond. In such a moment, a similar reflection is a dreadful reproach.

If it is one, my Edmond, pardon thy Malvina, who would not wish to afflict thee. And, why should I reproach thee,

who formed all the felicity of my life, and all which the world can offer? Thou, who at this moment surrounds me with thy love, and whose regrets will follow me to the tomb.

Oh! Malvina, do not speak thus. Thy kind words pierce my heart; and, when I am going to lose thee from my own fault; the excess even of thy hatred would be less agonising than the expressions of thy love. I have deserved it, he continued, in the most distressing manner, and voice. Is it not my vile ingratitude, which has embittered thy life? Is it not I, who am sending thee to thy grave?

O! stop, my Edmond, stop. O! save me from the idea of thy despair. No! Thou wast not guilty, since thou didst not forget me. And I am no longer unhappy, since I have been beloved. I can

die, without remorse. Oh! Edmond, you knew the tranquillity of soul I no possess, calm and serene as Nature at t close of day. All-powerful God! con nued she, clasping her hands, and el vating them over her husband, prote his life, and graciously grant that it m be exempt from the sorrows which ha oppressed mine, and that his last ho may be as happy as mine!

She was silent, her speech failing fro the energy with which she expressed he self in this affecting prayer occasioned feebleness, which continued some hour

The melancholy, the distressed Ed mond fixed his eyes on the countenanc of his beloved, his dying Malvina. H was silent; his impetuosity was extin guished; his agonised heart felt the ex tent of the misery he should endure, whe deprived of that being, which could alon

nder existence desirable. A settled de-
air arrested all the powers of his mind,
d fixed its residence in his soul. He no
nger inquired her situation. He had
othing more to say. He appeared as if
eprived of articulation and motion.
h! who can ever express real grief by
ords?—Impossible, when it proceeds
om that deep and settled sorrow, which
omentarily and silently corrodes and
ndermines the powers of life, till it de-
roys them; and this misery accumulates
ach instant, as if wishing to burst the
eart, that it might fly from its distresses.
n such a moment, one tear, only one
ar, would be a relief to our misery.

While all were endeavouring to assist
alvina, each person expressed in their
ountenance the sorrow and gloom which
ppressed them. The doctor's counte-
ance pourtrayed not even a ray of hope.
oon would that amiable being be no

more. The icy hand of death was go to chill that fair flower in the bloom youth. Those lips, which breathed c gentleness, were to be closed for e never more to be re-animated with breath of life. Her lingering soul, i few moments, would fly for ever.

On Malvina's opening her lang eyes, her first look was to her husba Dear Edmond, said she, if I did not hold you so much distressed, how sw would this moment be to me! I sh very soon behold my Clara, with a co tenance expressive of her celestial hap ness. She seems to call me: Come, co to me, and rejoice with the angels. T husband shall, one day, meet thee he But he will remain on earth, till he h accomplished the happiness of my daug ter. Such is the order of the Most Hig Edmond, it is not a vision. Submit thy destiny. Fulfil the duty I have n

glected, when I am no more. It is my last request.

I most sacredly promise, he replied, that you shall be obeyed. I shall live only to misery. I wish it. I ought to suffer. It will require a series of sorrow, to expiate thy death.

Edmond, said she, may weep for Malvina. He ought; for no one has ever loved him as I have. But let not thy heart be oppressed with any grief for what has passed. It is in the name of that heaven, which seems open to receive me, that I request it. Malvina will petition the Father of Mercy, who, I hope, will pardon all my errors, and from Him she will obtain thine also.

Oh! thou celestial angel, do not yet fly away from me, exclaimed Edmond, in

a transport. Yet stay one moment long
with thy Edmond, before an eternal
paration. No! Edmond, it will not
eternal, she replied, in the most a
mated tone. I am going to my Fath
who is thy Father--to my God; a
who is also thine. There are many se
in his celestial abode. I am going
implore one for thee; for where I a
thou wilt be also.

A sweet smile rested on her coun
nance. She attempted once more
press the hand of her husband and M
Saint Clare; but, not having strengt
she only made a sign to them; the
closing her eyes, fetched a deep sigh.

Edmond bent forward, to receive h
breath. It was too late. It had flo
for ever. Malvina was no more!

CHAP. XIV

THE UNHAPPY WEEP TOGETHER.

I SHALL draw a veil over the mournful scene which ensued. Experience, alone, can teach us the depth and extent of such woe; for it is utterly impossible to describe it. Human expressions cannot reach so far. And, if there is any thing which can increase it, it must be, when we are conscious of having contributed to shorten the existence

of the beloved object; when this mental voice pursues us night and day, and repeats that we have been the chief cause of the misery we experience. Yet, Edmond did not impute it entirely to his own fault; but, in his desperation, he accused all nature, and cursed the two women, whose detested plots had deceived Malvina, and occasioned this fatal catastrophe.

When Frances was first brought to him in hopes that the sight of her might calm his phrensy, he turned his eyes from her with horror; and, shuddering, cried, take her away from me; for there has been a fatality in the influence of that child which has led my beloved wife to the tomb.

The unhappy Edmond, therefore, became the chief object of Mrs. St. Clare's pity and attention; and her tender cares

and solicitudes were unremitting. She never left him; but seized every opportunity of recalling whatever could sooth or alleviate his grief, or pour the healing balm of consolation to his wound. She no longer beheld Edmond as the seducer of Louisa, or the volatile husband of Malvina; but as a wretched being, who was become the prey of sorrow and remorse; and too miserable, not to make her wish to forget that he had ever been guilty. Yet, one of Mrs. St. Clare's principal inducements was, to recal him to a just value of life, and bring him to a just sense of reason, that he might recollect, and be ready to undertake those duties which Malvina had left him to fulfil; and her cares were not fruitless.

Sir Edmond was so conscious that it would be some time at least, before it would be possible for him to live with Frances, that he was the first to press

Mrs. St. Clare's departure, by engaging her to take the child from his sight. Go, dearest, kindest of friends, said he, leave me; and do not any longer oppress, by your unmerited attentions, a miserable being, who is so very unworthy of them, and who is not in a situation to appreciate them as they deserve. Direct all your care, therefore, to Frances, as my Malvina desired you. As to myself, I cannot behold the child. No! I cannot. Malvina did not require that I should. If she had, I would obey her. However, as I will always be a careful guardian to the charge she has left me, I will accompany you on horseback to your own house, and then return here, alone.

At the word 'alone', his countenance changed, his look became wild.—Alone, in this retreat, which was chosen by love; where Malvina has lived with me; where she was the source of my felicity; and

where I have lost her, and all comfort has forsaken me. Solitary, and alone with her tomb; absorbed by my reflections and my love.

Mrs. St. Clare, therefore, very readily acquiesced to Sir Edmond's proposal, in hopes that she might prevail upon him to spend some time with her, at a distance from that dismal habitation, which contained Malvina's tomb. It being his own proposal to go with them, she imagined, that it rather proceeded from a wish to divert his melancholy. At least, she had a right to form such an opinion from his former character. But she was quite deceived in this supposition. Edmond was no longer the same. His vivacity and animation were quite extinguished by grief, and the deepest penitence had destroyed all the flightiness of his character; and, from henceforth, the whole universe to him was confined in

the narrow bounds of the cold stone which covered the ashes of his Malvina.

As soon, therefore, as he had conducted Frances and Mrs. St. Clare to the mansion of the latter, without taking leave of of either, he returned, riding all the night, and arrived at day-break at his own house. His first steps were directed to his wife's tomb. He had inclosed it by a very high railing, of which only himself and Mrs. St. Clare had a key, that no other foot might prophane or sully the sacred spot. But, as he now approached it, he heard a slight noise within it. He shuddered, and trembled through every nerve. His pulses throbbed with such violence, that he could not proceed. He did not place any faith in supernatural appearances. He did not hope for such a thing. He had seen his Malvina lifeless, and beheld her laid in the cold grave, which was but a few paces from

him. He was perfectly conscious of all this; yet, his agitated imagination transported him to that first moment when he had fancied she was no more, and yet heard her voice in that very spot. He drew nearer,, and very distinctly heard both sighs and weeping. Yet, he knew that it was impossible for any one to get over the palisade; and the door being carefully locked, and Mrs. St. Clare absent, he did not know what to conclude; his agitation was uncommon; and his fancy pictured a thousand vague conceits. He at last entered in a violent perturbation, and, by the yet feeble dawn, he perceived the figure of a man prostrate upon the earth; whose vestments appeared in disorder, and whose hair was wet with the cold dew of night. In a moment, all his ideal phantoms were vanished, and he was nearly as much struck as if he had lost Malvina a second time, and his

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light. Thou, who wast her friend, load me with reproaches and invectives. I will endure them all; for they will be infinitely less than those of my own heart.

Mr. Prior was struck with pity at the sight of such heart-felt woe. He sincerely repented of what he had said; and, raising his hands to heaven, Oh! Malvina, cried he, forgive me, if I have in my heart been tempted to curse the man on whom thou hast bestowed thy blessing. At thy tomb, I retract all that I have said or thought injurious to him. And thou, unhappy being! since Malvina is yet dear to thee; since thy tears are those of contrition, calm thy despair; for the band which united thee, is not broken. You will again meet her in those ethereal regions, where she now awaits you; there to enjoy, to all eternity, the pure delights of that union which I had ratified on earth.

No! No! said Edmond, all hopes of that nature are fled from my heart. The cruel hand, which has crushed that fair flower in its morning bloom—which has destroyed those days of felicity that kind heaven perhaps had destined her to enjoy, ought for ever to be banished from her sight. Heaven does not unite the assassin to the victim of his treachery.

Do not endeavour, said Mr. Prior, to penetrate into what fate heaven might have intended her, provided she had lived. Perhaps, her lot might have been sorrow and suffering; for, how often ought we to esteem an early death the first blessing of heaven? Who, alas! can tell what is best for man? The days of his vanity pass away like a vapour.

Ah! Mr. Prior, but can you imagine, that the idea of an uncertain evil can console me for the misery I suffer?

No! my friend, it will not console; but it may teach you to bow, with resignation, to the all-wise decrees of Providence, whose wisdom we cannot pretend to investigate. If God does not please to grant you comfort under your affliction, it is only that it may render you more estimable. Ever may you retain your sorrows! but do not let them enfeeble you so far, as to lose the desire of rectifying your former errors, by the performance of such virtuous actions as will render you worthy of the angel whom you love. The waves of eternity daily roll towards us, and will soon overwhelm us in its abyss, and would leave no vestige of our existence, if it was not destined that happiness was to be the lot of the just, and misery that of the wicked. Therefore, you have only to encourage such actions, as may permit you to wait without fear.

Ah! Mr. Prior, when I lost Malvina,

had I possessed the virtues of the whole universe, they could not have altered my destiny. My heart is dead to all consolation. I cannot, I do not wish to receive any. My tears, when I can shed them, are the only relief which is left me. But, whatever may be my anguish, my despair, yet, I do not wish to die. No! I ought to endure a long repentance. To die, would only be the expiation of a moment; but, to endure what I suffer, it will render the time I may live an age.

I will not leave you, Sir Edmond, said Mr. Prior, much affected. I will devote all my time and attention to you, if you will permit me, that I may recal peace to your dejected mind. Malvina may be pleased, that her friend should undertake the pious office of endeavouring to be the comforter of the husband she loves.

No! Mr. Prior; though I am sensible of the kindness of your intention, yet, as Malvina has left me solitary and alone, I will remain so. Leave me. Your generosity oppresses me. I only wish to behold what will increase, rather than diminish my grief. I only wish to dwell near her tomb, and its congenial gloom. Go, then. Malvina will be more gratified by your attention to my little charge. Bestow all your cares upon her. Form her mind to all those excellences her mother possessed in so eminent a degree, that she may be a copy of her whose death she in some measure contributed to. I do not wish to see her again. No! Take her far, far from me. Yet, tell her, that she is inestimably dear to me; that I would sacrifice my life a thousand times for her. Yes! Go. Leave me, continued he, with wildness in his expression. Why did you come here? No one, but myself, has a right to shed

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Frances. Happy to have it in his power to obey any wish of hers after her death, he vowed never to leave the child; and, in little more than a year after, Mrs. St. Clare, having lost her father, determined, after obtaining Sir Edmond's and Lord Sherridan's permission, to go to Lisbon, that she might, by that means, gain a little more liberty for her melancholy sister, by taking her from a country, where she was known; and Mr. Prior accepted the proposal of attending them, with pleasure.

The mournful particulars of Malvina's death, and Sir Edmond's despair, were for some time the conversation of all Edinburgh. Every tear which was dropped to their memory, was also a reproach to Mrs. Burton. She, therefore, determined to avoid them, by returning to her castle, amid the mountains. But, on her arrival there, the first words she heard

from the poor and the unfortunate, were inquiries for Edmond and Malvina. The benedictions which were conferred upon their names, wounded her vanity, and distressed her mind. In vain did she wish to fly from herself; her conscience followed her every where. She could no longer enjoy tranquillity or repose. She lived in continual fear, and fancied she read in every countenance, contempt and hatred; that every one mentally repeated, the triumph of the wicked is of short duration, and the joys of the deceitful continue but for a moment. Her soul, tormented from every mental and visual cause, and the certainty of having entirely lost that exalted reputation, which, she vainly imagined, she had so lastingly acquired; attended by the mortification of no longer seeing herself surrounded by flatterers, who paid her adulation, at the same time that they despised her; plunged her, from this

concatenation, into a gloomy state of mind, which consumed her by degrees, and conducted her to the grave. On finding her end approaching, she looked round her; and the retrospect of the past produced only regret, and the most dreadful fears alarmed her for the future. She, therefore, gained neither consolation from reflecting on what she had done, nor in the destiny which awaited her. Between the world, which was vanishing from her view, and that awful eternity, which she was on the verge of entering, she trembled at the idea of both the one and the other, and could have wished to disappear as a shadow from the contempt of that world she was leaving, and the judgment of that she was on the point of approaching. Though anxiously wishing to obtain Sir Edmond's forgiveness, yet she would not humiliate herself, by requesting his attendance. She, therefore, continued, to her latest hour, the victim

to that vanity which had ever been her idol, and died, without allowing herself to sue for that pardon, which would have given tranquillity to her soul.

Mrs. Fenwick continued to shine with as much *éclat* as ever in the world, resigning herself with impunity to every pleasure, and a constant scene of dissipation. We might be tempted to suppose, that the divine vengeance had forgot her. But, though it may be delayed for a time, such are not always suffered to escape; and the justice of heaven is only suspended, until the moment arrives, when it may overtake, and strike with more certainty. She will certainly, one day, meet with her punishment; perhaps, from the hands of those, whose misery she has occasioned.

In vain did the solicitations of friendship, and all the seductions of the world,

endeavour to tempt Sir Edmond from his retreat. Nothing could prevail on him to leave the sight of that tomb which contained his beloved wife. It is natural to imagine, that his sorrows, from time, became less poignant; but, then, he was habituated to them; and a long endurance of grief and suffering deprives the mind of the power of enjoying, or even wishing for, any pleasure. Thus, the volatile, though at last amiable, Edmond ever remained thoughtful and melancholy, supporting a languishing existence, and enveloped by an unconquerable grief, to that moment, when, according to Malvina's words, after having sacrificed more than his life for Frances, he felt conscious that he was worthy of going to meet the only woman whom he had ever loved upon earth.

THE END.

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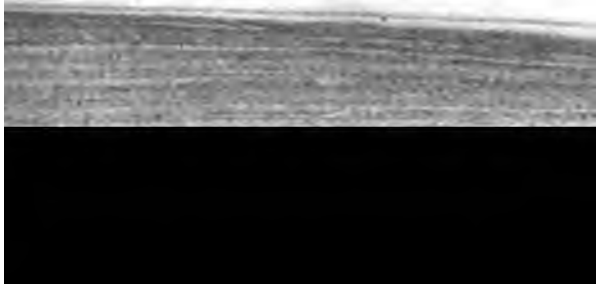
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